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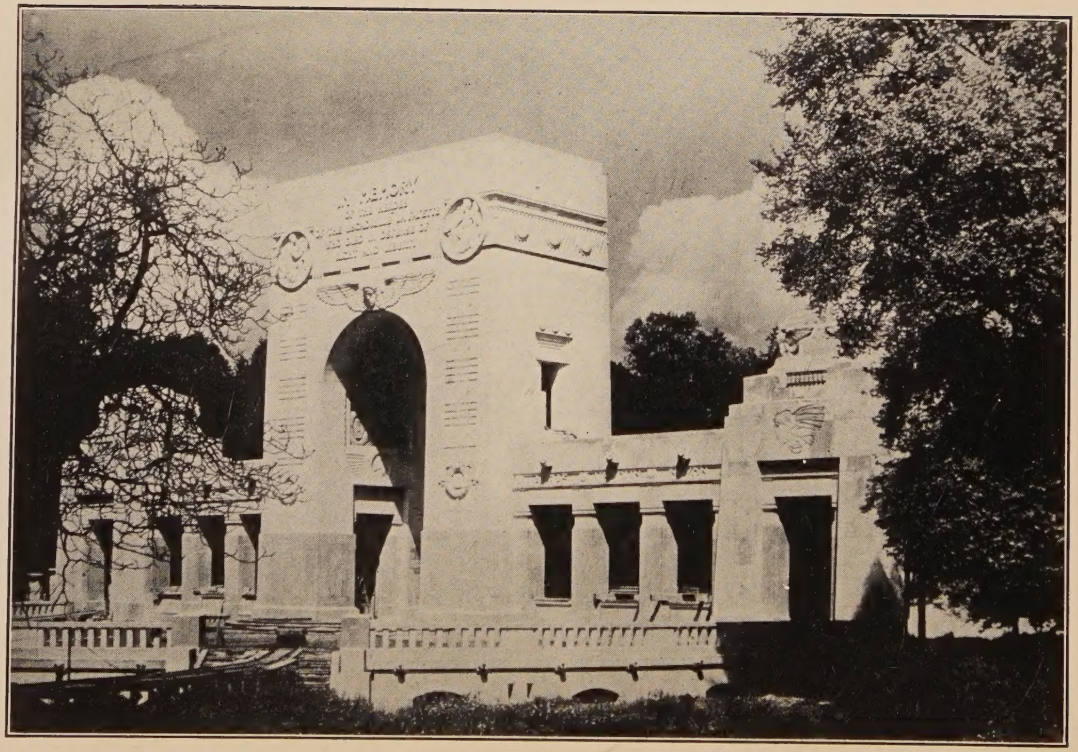
ONE MAN'S WAR



LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL, ERECTED AND DEDICATED IN PARIS DURING THE SUMMER OF 1927

ONE MAN'S WAR

The Story of the Lafayette Escadrille

BY

LIEUTENANT BERT HALL

AND

LIEUTENANT JOHN J. NILES

NEW YORK

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And, differing from Mr. George Bernard Shaw, this preface will be a very short one. It will advise all prospective readers that:—

First. The war was a very big place, where a great many people did an incredible number of things.

Second. All reports to the contrary, some of those people were Americans. (The truth of this statement is still being discussed by several important nations who were involved in the late unpleasantness.)

Third. "One Man's War" is an emotional history and must be taken that way.

Fourth. Lieut. Hall was born in Kentucky, spent his early childhood in the Ozark Mountains, learned the art of "snake-stomping," and later became an automobile racing driver and a pioneer aviator.

Fifth. Although he was a commissioned officer in the French Army, Lieut. Hall's attitude was really that of a simple soldier, and he saw the war at close range mostly, dismissing colossal events lightly—with a single flourish—but treating intimate details voluminously. (I have the same feeling about soldiering, for although I personally gained the modest rank of First Lieutenant in the United States Army, I would rather remember the days when I was a buck private and one of the original 77 Aviation Cadets.)

Sixth. Lieut. Hall and I have spent endless months in libraries trying to verify the events recorded in "One Man's War"; this research was carried on at the Public

Libraries in Chicago, Illinois, Des Moines, Iowa, New York City, the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Seventh. Lieut. Hall writes all his original copy in long hand, refusing to use the more modern device, the typewriter, and therefore it took four months, four days and nine hours to type and prepare this MS., in spite of his very excellent handwriting.

Eighth. Lieut. Hall seldom carries a watch and has never owned a calendar, and the Russian part of this yarn was kept partly by the Russian calendar and partly by the European calendar, and the French parts of the story were apparently recorded by a method known as, "yesterday was the 9th, today is the 10th, and that makes tomorrow Friday."

Ninth. Lieut. Hall and I wish every aviator a long life, tight wings, fogless skies and a happy landing—"square away with the wind"—when the motor stops for the last time.

Most sincerely,

John Jacob Niles,
First Lieutenant, Air Service ORC.

le Bourget Airport
le Bourget, France
Summertime, 1928.

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Lafayette Escadrille Memorial	*Frontispiece*
Clippings from the Paris Edition of *The New York Herald*	24
Clipping from the Paris Edition of *The New York Herald*	26
Members of the Foreign Legion	33
The Famous Flat-winged Nieuport	84
Early Days at Luxeuil-les-Bains	125
Norman Prince, Charles Nungesser, and Didier Masson	125
Raoul Lufbery in His Nieuport 15	132
The Original Lafayette Escadrille and the Three Dogs	132
Lafayette Escadrille Pilots in Flying Outfits	138
German Machine Gun	138
Lieutenant William Thaw Receiving American Flag	177
Lieutenant William Thaw and the Lion Cub "Whiskey"	180
Raoul Lufbery, Major in the United States Army	180
Picture Taken Shortly After Death of Norman Prince	202
Lieutenant Bert Hall	292
Identification Card of Lieutenant John J. Niles	292
The Fokker D-7	325
Strip Cartoon by Unknown Artist in Cigognes Escadrille	325
The Pfalz One-place Scout	325

PART I

CHAPTER I

I suppose one would call me a self-taught aviator, for back in the early days—1910 to be exact—when a person started out to fly, he couldn't sign up in a highly organized flying school with flocks of planes, dozens of pilot instructors and mechanics, and Government inspectors, and ground school courses and all such modern paraphernalia. In 1910, one taught oneself.

The first plane I ever had under my own control was a Maurice Farman Biplane Pusher, with a fog-cutter out in front and an air-cooled Renault motor behind. We called those Farmans "mechanical cows" (*vaches mechaniques*), and they were just about as easily maneuvered as a cow. There were places in the nacelle for two. (The nacelle is the cockpit containing the pilots, the instruments and the engine.) We, of course, had wheels and skids under our landing carriages by that time and some of the Farmans were equipped with skids under the tails, while others had two tiny wheels.

Up to 1915, most of Maurice Farman's planes had a characteristic type of control, sometimes called a cloche control. It was a metal post with an arm across the top and a handhold on each end of the cross arm. This type of control should not be confused with the so-called dep control or the joy stick.

I flew first at Buc, France. There was a small field at the town of Buc, which, by the way, is situated a short distance south of Versailles. That was before the days of Villacoubler, the famous military and commercial flying field southwest of Paris, where, during the past war,

thousands of planes were manufactured, set up, tested, equipped with guns, and sent away to the front.

My first day at Buc was not spent in the air. The fact is, I studied the motor and the controls and the plane; and talked to Maurice Farman and watched him fly; and in the days that followed, I taxied that mechanical cow over the little field a good long while before I really opened up the throttle for a take-off.

In later years, I had many opportunities to observe flying training at Issoudun, at Tours, at Avord, at Clare-mont-Ferrand, at St. Jean de Monts, at Cazeau, and now every day or so I go out on Long Island, to Curtiss Field and the other training centers, where patient instructors beg, plead, cajole and curse at young men, many of whom I am convinced haven't an ounce of air sense. I have been told by well-informed observers that in some training detachments during the war, more than twenty-five per cent. of the personnel was lost before the men ever got to the front. They were in a hurry, 'tis true, but they must also have been working with a great many aspiring young fellows who were simply not intended to take the air.

After taxiing my mechanical cow around until I understood how to make her go in a straight line, I started back at one end of the field and, opening up the throttle, I really took off about two or three feet. Then I cut the motor and made a landing. It was thrilling indeed, to be free from the earth. This take-off and land operation was tried until I couldn't resist any longer. I opened the throttle and held it open. The ground slid away from me, trees and buildings slipped past. I could see faces looking up from the ground—white, staring faces. As I passed over a road near by, I experienced my first bump. The road was hot under the noonday

sun, and naturally there was a considerable up-rush of air. For a moment I lost control. Passing out of the up-rush, I dropped into what was then known as a Swiss cheese section of air. It was like stepping into an elevator shaft at the 15th floor and stopping with a crash at the 5th.

But the mechanical cow was a good old bus. She held together and after a lot of wondering how, wishing I didn't have to, and wanting to stay up forever, I did finally come down and made a fair landing. One's first landing is oftentimes good. After that, there may be many galloping goose landings; that is the result of getting cocky. Cockiness is not a good characteristic in a pilot's make-up. Pilots often die of it, only the newspapers report it under different names.

At the Buc flying field, mechanics, airplane manufacturers, newspapermen and others used to shake hands with the pilots before they took off for their first *tour de la pieste.* That's what they used to call the first loop of the field. The manufacturers and newspaper men were usually dressed up in formal morning suits, some of them with high hats. They looked like theatrical process-servers. I used to have trouble keeping my face straight sometimes, but it appeared to be the thing to do—shake hands with them all and then fly.

At first, I wore my usual street clothes, with an automobile duster over the outside like an overcoat. Of course, there was no precedent for costumes in the air. We couldn't go very high, so the problem of keeping warm hadn't presented itself. My duster used to fly up in my face, so after several trials, I tied it down tight at the knees like a Jap woman about to commit hara-kiri. When I think back on those days, I wonder how any of us ever came out alive. We knew so little about what we were

trying to do. Our mechanics and riggers were fellows we had inherited from the automobile racing events, and many times they knew less about the actual intimate construction of the plane and why it flew than we did.

There was a half-witted mechanic on the field at Buc who nearly finished off a mighty good pilot one day when he decided to change the method of fore-and-aft control without telling anyone, just to see if his new method wasn't natural and inherent. In every airplane I had ever seen when the pilot wanted to go down, he pushed forward on the stick or whatever controls the plane is designed to use. When he wanted to climb, he pulled back on the controls. This half-witted mechanic (I never knew him by any other name than Edouard) decided to reverse the controls on a plane and see what would happen.

The plane he experimented on was an early Caudron—a biplane with a twenty-eight H.P. Anzani motor and ailerons between the wings. The pilot who was flying this Caudron had been in the air some time and was considered to be very good. How he got off the ground no one could ever tell and although we asked the pilot many questions, he never could tell either. But once in the air, he did the craziest lot of flying you could ever imagine. He soared and dipped like a hungry buzzard and after apparently running out of gasoline (we only carried a very small supply those days), he came down like what the Italians call a bundle of spaghetti. His plane was a total "write-off." He wasn't hurt though, beyond a few scratches and a pretty fair shake-up. But the mechanic—we never saw him again. He disappeared. And after we had examined the wreck and discovered what had actually happened, the story came out from some other folks on the field who had heard rumors. That was the end of Edouard.

Almost the same thing happened out at Dayton, Ohio, when the Wright Brothers were perfecting their biplane. They were flying at a place known as Huffman's Prairie, about nine miles from the city of Dayton. As I remember it, they called the stop on the electric cars, "Simms Station." Wilbur Wright declared that the proper manner of control was push forward to come up and pull back to go down. Orville Wright contended that his brother was mistaken and made himself a plane with controls similar to those used today throughout the world. One day Wilbur Wright was coming in to make a landing and misjudged the height of a nearby hangar. In a moment of excitement, he pulled back on his controls. It was an unconscious attempt to miss the hangar. This movement, owing to the method of his rigging, shot his plane down, and only by the slightest margin did he miss being killed. He did hit the building and his under-carriage suffered a slight damage. This proved to him that the natural method of control was as his brother Orville had contended, and from that day to this the present standard control has been installed in all airplanes.

In 1910, flying was a miracle. Anyone who could afford a plane and knew anything about flying it was sure of engagements. There were also lots of small and large prizes offered for spectacular flying achievements, and what was considered spectacular in those days would only be funny in 1928. I must say, however, that many of the pilots who are flying today would find it almost impossible to fly the types of planes we used from, say 1910 to 1919. Since the war, the progress in aeronautical engineering has been in the direction of safety and ease of control until today the plane almost flies the pilot; whereas, in the early days, the pilot either flew the plane and flew it skill-

fully or they buried him as another of those fools who thought he was kin to a buzzard.

Nor were there any flying inspectors or Department of Commerce licenses or commercial or private ratings—in 1910. Passengers and ten-dollar-a-hop sight-seers were unknown. We were, however, even at that far away time, watched by the War Department. There were some wise heads in Paris; they had their ears on the ground and their eyes in the air.

. . . . . .

My first year of flying taught me that the pusher was not the ultimate type. The idea of the motor in front and the pilot somewhere near the center of balance seemed to be much more practical. This attracted me to the Bleriot monoplane, which, in 1911, was equipped with a fifty-horse-power Gnome rotary motor, wing-warping instead of loose ailerons, and an open-work fuselage behind the pilot's cockpit. The reader must not be confused by the word "wing-warping." It merely means that the curve of the wing was altered slightly at the rear edge whenever the pilot wanted to level up the flight of the plane or bank a bit in going around a turn. The warping was done by a series of wires connected to the controls and operated, of course, by the pilot.

There were a lot of wires in that 1911 model Bleriot. It reminded me of the story the French mechanics used to tell about using a bird to discover any missing wires or struts. A bird was released somewhere inside the portion of the plane enclosed by the wires, and if the bird escaped, there was a wire missing. This is only a tale though. I don't believe it was ever really done. Those French mechanics were such clowns—always shaking hands and wearing enough lucky charms to weight down a pack mule.

CHAPTER II

In 1913, Abdul Hamid, the Sultan of Turkey, decided to have an Air Service. He was engaged in a war with Bulgaria just then, and as the news about the application of aviation to the art of warfare percolated into the Near East, Abdul Hamid became quite excited over the idea of "arming his forces with flying eyes." There were no such things as aerial bombs in those days; at least, I had never seen any. And even as late as August, 1914, when Lieut. Immelman flew over Paris in his "Taube," the most highly improved aerial bombs were things he threw over the side, little contact exploding affairs of practically no destructive value.

But the old Sultan wanted an Air Service and was ready to pay for it too, the equivalent of one hundred American dollars a day, payable in advance. Thereupon, with a new model 1913 Bleriot, equipped with a 60 H.P. Gnome motor and my mechanic, André Pierce, I signed up with the Turks; signed up to fly, reconnoiter, and do artillery recalage, which means signaling the batteries when they were short or over their targets.

The first morning as I was ready to take off, a Turkish officer came to the improvised hangar where we kept the Bleriot and handed me a large bag of Turkish paper money. I did not fly that day. Next morning the Turkish officer paid me in gold money, and from then on I reconnoitered as long as they had hard metal. Those Turkish paper notes were suspicious looking things; I regarded them in much the same way the American soldiers did French paper one-franc notes during the past war, as cigar coupons.

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The coffee was terrible but as I didn't care for coffee, that didn't matter. My mechanic, however, who was French, had been brought up on *café-au-lait*. Any of you-all who know Turkish coffee, can imagine how far it is from French *café-au-lait*. Then, of course, the coffee we had was Turkish *army* coffee; the Turkish civilian coffee might not have been so bad, but naturally, the army fare was rather low grade. Pierce was terribly unhappy.

The flying I did was uninteresting too. Occasionally, I would fly down low just to frighten the Bulgars and they in turn shot at me with everything they had. They must have been mighty poor marksmen—there wasn't even a hole in my wings.

All the financial arrangements I made with the Turks were made through an Englishman named Captain Dickerson. He was a slender little fellow, but a natural-born soldier of fortune. He had been one of the Sultan's right hand men for many years. It was rumored that he couldn't go back to England. I remember well how he used to ask me what London looked like; if there were any new buildings, new theatres, or monuments, and also about the new transatlantic liners. He was a lonesome little chap and I liked him a lot.

There was another foreigner in Turkey who held an important position. He was an American, an ordinary sailorman from Brooklyn. He was known in Turkey as Bockman Pasha. It seems that the United States Government sold the Turks two battleships and Bockman (his enlistment expiring at that time) went to Turkey to help the Turks in the management and operation of the ships until they could get on by themselves. He had a contract with the Turks, wherein they were supposed to pay him a rather handsome sum of money all in gold—no paper

money or cigar coupons. On the completion of Bockman's duty as an instructor, he presented himself at the Naval headquarters and there they gave him an order on one of the Ottoman banks. At the Ottoman bank, he was paid part in gold and part in paper, drafts on other Ottoman banks, etc. That afternoon, Mr. Bockman quietly went back to one of the ships then anchored in the harbor at Constantinople, and aiming a broadside of large caliber guns at one of the most important public buildings, advised the Turks to pay in gold and pay quickly. Thirty minutes was the time limit according to the legend.

There was a hurried conference and Mr. Bockman was paid. When the Sultan found out what had happened, he was so pleased with the conduct of the American sailorman that he designated the title of Pasha to be affixed to the name of Bockman and furthermore, offered him an engagement in the Turkish Naval council. Bockman Pasha ultimately became a Vice Admiral. I suppose that fellow was the only American who made the Sultan toe the mark and still remain in the old Turk's good graces. At that, it took a threatened broadside of 12-inch naval guns.

. . . . . .

What war there was in 1913 sprawled itself out over the hills at Adrianople, and since being in four years of the World War, I can see that the Balkan war was only a skirmish. The Turks were consistent losers as long as I was there. Perhaps it was because I was a poor aerial observer, but no matter, they were consistent losers in spite of the hard fighting of their soldiers, who believed that death in battle was just one jump this side of heaven.

There was no trench warfare those days. It was all open fighting between mounted outfits and small detach-

ments of rapidly moving infantrymen. The light field artillery got into that war but the shooting wasn't overly effective, mainly because of the dud shells and a lack of knowledge on the part of the gunners.

I entered the service of the Turkish Army on February 16, 1913, and was paid promptly for the flying I did from that date until the middle of April, 1913. Then they welshed a bit and started to pay me fifty dollars one day and sixty the next and forty-five the next. So, in view of the poor quality of the coffee and the unreliability of the Turkish exchequer, Monsieur André Pierce and I packed up and flew into Roumania, stopping at Bucharest.

At Bucharest, we were engaged by an agent of the Bulgarian Government to do reconnaissance and artillery recalage against the Turks at the same price we had originally received from the old Sultan. So next day, André Pierce and I left Bucharest and flew over into Bulgaria where we went to work flying as before, receiving the equivalent of one hundred dollars gold per day in advance.

How the Turks did shoot at me when I flew over their lines! They wasted enough ammunition on that 1913 Bleriot to lick the armies of their Balkan enemies with Austria and Russia thrown in for good measure.

Now André Pierce was a mind reader. He was psychic and all that. He distrusted the Bulgars on general principles. I didn't have time to distrust anyone then; I was busy reconnoitering and missing the Turkish anti-aircraft barrage, which was a veritable hail of rifle and pistol fire. But Pierce was on the ground all the while and had ample opportunity to observe and to listen to conversations whenever he could understand them. He wanted me to pack up and go. He wanted to leave the war in the Balkans, but I had promised the Bulgarian General and that was that.

Then there was a woman, named Madame Chausson—a French person. She had very lovely eyes—lavender eyes, Pierce used to say. I didn't go in for such artistic classifications, but even so, I was not unaffected by her charms. Pierce declared she was a spy. I merely knew she was a French woman far from home and unable to explain why.

The Bulgarians paid according to agreement for about thirty days. Then they welshed. In the meantime, I had had news that the Turks were anxious to take us back, so like a fool I packed up and was about to start back to the Turkish lines. But I never got off the ground. The Bulgarians arrested me. I never knew whether Madame Chausson found out about my decision to go back to the Turks again and tipped off the Commanding Officer, or whether the Bulgarians were just awfully clever. It didn't matter much how I had been found out—the important thing was how to escape.

From the improvised hangar where they captured me I was taken to the most terrible jail I have ever seen. It was a one-room affair—stone walls, no light, very little new air, and a seething mob of prisoners—some just ordinary garrison prisoners, some captured Turks, some accused of being spies like myself and, like myself, awaiting execution at the very next sunrise.

It was just sundown when they closed that jail house door on me. Food was served a short while after that. They brought in two big pans, one on top of the other. The top pan contained barley soup with hunks of bread floating around in it, and the under pan contained a hashed-up mixture of vegetables, mostly beets. I can remember that dinner as if it were yesterday. God, how those prisoners ate! They just went to it with their hands, the stronger ones edging in first and the weaker

ones getting what was left. The remaining drops of soup were licked up by men on all fours like dogs. After the food had been eaten, the guards brought in a tank of water. It was lukewarm and very stale, but I drank as much as I could hold, so as to extend my stomach and thereby forget some of my hunger.

We had hardly finished mess when someone discovered a dead man in one corner of the prison room. He was a very young Russian fellow with a mass of blonde hair—wavy hair, much like a girl's. We decided that he had starved to death—not because there wasn't enough food (such as it was), but because he had been wounded in both arms and found it impossible to edge into the community mess pan. After a few days he got weak, I suppose, and then just died off. He'd been very quiet about it. There were several letters in his pockets, written in a sprawly, chicken-track handwriting. Some of the other prisoners said they were from a sweetheart in Russia. The letters told about how wonderful the weather was just then and how much the writer missed her Peter. And there was Peter starved to death in a Bulgarian prison! I almost became sentimental over that fellow's death. He looked so young and so very blonde—and then he had a sweetheart in Russia who missed him terribly.

Presently, the guards came in with a lantern. They hung it up near the door. It was a weak, ineffective, oil affair. We would have been better off without it. The same guards who brought in the lantern took away the mess pans and the water tank. That seemed to be a signal for the rats—at least, they came out of every corner and whined and squealed and scurried around all the rest of the night.

If any of you-all think a live rat isn't a terrifying ani-

mal, just arrange to have yourself awakened from a light sleep by having one run across your face. The smell of them is enough, but the touch of their warm fuzzy bodies —God! This was my first experience with rats and I've never been able to forget it. I'd rather encounter a combat airplane with four machine guns on it any day than to wake up some night and find a rat trying to decide where he was going to bite me first. It's terrifying, I tell you. Nothing else! I had visions of the medieval method of torture where a rat was placed on a man's belly and a metal pot strapped around the man so as to cover the rat entirely. Heat is applied to the pot and the rat, in a frenzied desire to escape, eats its way out through the man's abdomen. This is only a legend, but that night I had difficulty in dismissing the picture from my mind.

We had told the guards about the dead Russian and they said they'd take the body away when they got good and ready. One of the prisoners pointed to the body and said, "Rat bait!" After that, several of the prisoners moved the body over to the doorway, so the guards would see him as they went in and out. They hoped this would be a gentle reminder that a grave had to be dug.

Outside, a drumhead court-martial was in progress. From time to time, the guards would come in and inform a prisoner that he had been found guilty; that he would be shot at sun-up, or put to hard labor, which was perhaps worse than being shot. It must have been near midnight when I was called outside. My case was of considerable importance. I was allowed to say a few words. First, they asked me where my mechanic was. I told them I didn't know. Then they asked me who I was, what I was; how I came to be there. But the decision had already been made. They told me rather calmly that I would be shot at sun-up. I would be permitted to send

any messages I liked. They could not guarantee that the messages would be delivered for, of course, there was a war going on and all that.

As the guards took me back into the jail house, I noticed that several of the prisoners were moving the body of the dead Russian again. Ten minutes later, they dragged the body back to where it had been before, not far from the doorway. No one seemed to know what all this ghoulish body moving was about, and besides that, I had problems of my own.

The disappearance of Pierce was rather a mystery to me. He had been so dependable up to this time. But now he was gone—and he was carrying half of the money we had collected. I went over and over all the schemes I could trump up, but there seemed to be no way out. It was the firing squad in the morning! And then I'd never see Higginsville, Missouri, again, and my father, who had fought all through the Civil War and later when the Confederacy was washed out, joined Maximilian and Carlotta. My father, George Hall, had made a jolly fine war and came through alive, while I would be bounced off as a spy.

All the while the rats scurried and the light flickered and the body of the dead Russian almost seemed to breathe. One of the prisoners kept having what soldiers call battle nightmares. Aviators have them all the time. This fellow had apparently been a cavalryman. He bellowed out cavalry commands and screamed with an exultant kind of delight whenever his saber made contact with the neck of some phantom infantryman. It was awful!

A short while later, being unable to sleep, I sat down near the doorway not far from the body of the dead Russian. In the faint light of the lantern the thing looked

very much alive. I thought I was seeing things, but somehow it seemed to be very strange. There was a faint glow of color in the Russian's face and the sunken, starved cheeks had given way to a rather well-fed look. I took down the lantern and looked more closely.

"Great God," I said, "this fellow has come back to life. We can't let the burial party take him away. He's alive, really alive."

But then I noticed the absence of the wounded arms. There was some trickery somewhere. Almost at once, to my great astonishment, the so-called corpse spoke to me. I couldn't understand, but I hung the lantern up as quickly as possible and backed away to a place where I could regain my composure.

A few moments later, a Turk touched me on the elbow. He spoke in very fair French. In a few words he explained exactly what had happened and he begged me not to give away the secret. I knew then why the Russian's body had been moved so often. One of the prisoners who had been sentenced to die at sun-up had, with the help of some friends, swapped clothes and places with the dead Russian. The condemned prisoner hoped the burial detail would not recognize the fact that the body was still warm and while they were transporting what they thought to be a dead Russian to the graveyard, a live Turk would wait his chance to make an escape. It was worth trying and I have great respect for the fellow who thought it up.

In the darkness it might have happened, and although I left before the burial detail arrived, I could imagine the state of mind those frightened fellows would be thrown into when their cadaver came back to life and put up a fight for his liberty.

Long after I had given up hope (in fact, it was past midnight) two guards with an officer came in and told

me to prepare for an immediate departure. There was no preparation necessary. I left at once. André Pierce had bought my liberty with part of the money he was carrying. Several hours later, as André was spinning the propeller on my plane, so the motor would be started and warmed up with the first full daylight, I heard a burst of rifle fire. It was not very far away. Five volleys followed the first. Six men had been executed. I would have been the seventh, but for the quick thinking and the dependability of my mechanic. It cost us quite a lot of money. The Bulgarian officers who released me were avaricious fellows.

We flew that morning to Nilkopo and then shipped the plane to Bucharest. At Nilkopo I learned why I had been convicted and sentenced to be shot. The Bulgarians didn't want me to get out of the country with all the gold specie André Pierce and I were carrying. It wasn't a matter of spying at all. They hated to see all their good gold fall into the hands of a foreigner, particularly one who made it with such apparent ease as an aviator.

André and I were surely glad to shake the dust of the Balkan war off our feet. At Bucharest we did several exhibition flights and then flew to Kiev, in Ukrania. The summer of 1913 was a very profitable time for us. We gave exhibitions at Rosdiena, Kishinev and Odessa. Everywhere we took in from four thousand to ten thousand rubles and the common people seemed to think they were getting their money's worth too. My little sixty-horse-power Gnome motor never missed a lick all that summer. Those early rotary motors were superb pieces of mechanism.

. . . . . .

Early in 1914, I had an opportunity to come back to the States, but like so many other Americans who visit

Paris, I couldn't seem to tear myself away. And then things were happening in an aeronautical way. The French were encouraging flying in a very liberal manner. Before the United States had awakened to the possibilities of a Military Air Service, the French had had their "military trials" year after year, and by the middle of 1914, had developed the Caudron, the Breguet, the Deperdussin, the Bleriot, the Farman, the Nieuport, the Morane-Saulnier, the Voisin.

In Germany, Count Zeppelin was perfecting his lighter-than-air dirigibles, receiving assistance from the government and collecting huge sums of money from the German public in popular subscriptions. The Germans, from the Kaiser down, had unlimited confidence in Count Zeppelin. And he built great ships, beginning in 1900, when he turned off a 400-foot affair with two sixteen-horse-power Daimler engines and ending in the production of the 2,500,000-cubic-foot ZR-3 (now the Los Angeles) with her Maybach power plants of 420 H.P. each.

One must admit that for a soldier of fortune, the Continent was the proper place during the summer of 1914. For after Archduke Francis Ferdinand had been killed while riding in his red automobile in the city of Sarajevo, all of us who had our ears on the ground knew that something was sure to happen. There were those of us who almost wished it would happen. I can't remember whether I wished for a big gauge war or not, but I can remember that I was extremely excited by the progress as reported day by day in the papers.

When the mobilization was placarded throughout the city of Paris, it seemed that the entire city stopped a moment to read. And after reading, stopped another moment to think. After that moment of thought, there was

never a second of indecision. The French mobilization went on as smoothly as if they were having the annual maneuvers. Of course, there were some scenes at the railway stations, where wives and mothers told their men good-bye. And those street parades with the women walking along at the sides of the columns, sometimes carrying a part of the soldiers' equipment. . . . It was the kind of thing we had read about in books.

I felt the thrill of it—even I, a hard-boiled soldier of fortune—a man who was not supposed to have the slightest trace of nerves. I felt my throat tighten and several times the scene of the marching columns swam in oddly elliptical circles. By God, I was shedding tears!

Soldiers were everywhere! Over night the entire male population of the Republic had put away its civilian clothes and swanked out in blue tunics and poppy-red breeches. What a picture those poilus made! And how little they knew of what the future held. The railway stations were alive with soldiers and the trains were loaded to the running-boards with horizon-blue-clad men—men who drank an occasional swig of *pinard*, nibbled on a hunk of hard bread, watched the landscape go by and wondered when the war would be over.

In those early days, all the papers were full of crazy ideas of a quick victory. No one knew that the Americans would have to come three thousand miles and bring nearly two million men to help push the Germans back across the Rhine. It was a long, bloody nightmare—that period from the first of August, 1914, to the signing of the Armistice in Marshal Foch's private car on the morning of November 11, 1918.

CHAPTER III

Just before the war broke out, I had cracked up my Bleriot down in the Pyrenees Mountains, not far from the city of Tarbes. Previous to the last flight I took in that ship, I visited one of the sacred grottoes. The natives in Tarbes said my visit to the holy shrine was the only thing that saved my life. I didn't share their ideas at all; a very large tree and some rather lucky flying saved my life, as far as I could tell.

I had been foolishly flying down rather close to the ground, in spite of the fact that there were practically no fields suitable for landing within a radius of ten kilometers. All of a sudden, my motor stopped. There was no time to lose, because, contrary to the lay point of view, when an airplane motor stops, the plane comes down—not like a plummet perhaps, but quickly—sometimes too quickly.

Beneath me the trees looked thick, but as I came closer I saw that there were open spots; the openings however were not large enough to allow more than fifty meters of taxiing, so I picked out a soft-looking tree and dropped the good old Bleriot into it.

Some woodsmen came from the city of Tarbes and with their help, I managed to extricate the plane, but it was a total loss, except the motor. I sold the remains for about twenty-five hundred francs and returned to Paris, just in time to hear the first news of the impending war.

My home in Paris was in the Passy district, not far from the Bois de Boulogne. I never will forget the concierge who took care of the building. She came to me on

Sunday morning (mobilization having been fully announced the afternoon before, and all the railways going east and north having been taken over by the Government) and said:

"Monsieur Hall will be very patient with an old lady after this."

"Why, yes, Mother Pivot, surely I'll be patient with an old lady. Haven't I always been? Has something happened? Have I been *pas gentil?*"

"It is only the war—Philip has joined his regiment. I must attend to the building alone now. Monsieur Hall will be very patient."

She seemed to be looking far off over the excitement and the bustle of the terrified city—far off to a marching column of blue-clad figures. Her son Philip was in the column—Philip, who wanted to be an architect. He had been attending the Beaux Arts. The concierge had known war before. Her father was a veteran of 1870. I tried to be impersonal about the situation, but I'm sure I was not. The old lady looked like a painting—she was wearing the usual little white starched collar that marked her Sunday costume from the things she wore on week days.

"Yes, Mother Pivot, I'll be patient, and if I can do anything any time for you or Philip—"

It was an old worn-out phrase, but to save my life I couldn't think of another thing. She bowed her little formal bow and went away. Later, I looked into her little room where she sat beside the downstairs doorway. A small red candle was burning beside a picture of Christ. Not far away was a picture of Philip. It had been taken when he entered the Beaux Arts. As I went way downtown, I thought of what Mother Pivot had said, "*C'est la*

guerre!" It was the first time I had ever heard the phrase used.

. . . . . .

It was just sundown when I met (by previous arrangement) René Philezot, in front of the Café de l'Opera. We sat on the Opera side of the Café, under the awnings that covered part of the sidewalk. René was a big game hunter; as a matter of fact, he was up to that time one of the best known elephant hunters in the world. The French Government had given him permission to hunt over any of the French-African possessions. René was a brave man and a very liberal man too. I remember well how he sent the Red Cross a check for 2,000 French francs the day before he was killed. That happened in the trenches.

As René and I sat there sipping our Vermouth Cassis and watching the endless throngs of newly mobilized soldiers, we planned to join the French army. Our outfit would be the American Volunteer Corps. We would ultimately have to go into the Foreign Legion. I, of course, wanted to fight in the air, but that was a future consideration. The French Government had only a few planes. For the present, it would be the Infantry, or any old branch of the service, we didn't care, so long as we were fighting for the French Republic.

Next morning, René and I went to see an American friend of ours named George Casmeze. He had an office at 11 rue de Valois. One side of his place opened onto rue de Valois and the other side opened onto the Palais Royale Arcade. George Casmeze was a strange combination; his father was an American, his mother was a Turk; he was born in England, but was an American citizen. George's office became the headquarters of the American Volunteer Corps.

René Philezot, with Mr. Charles Sweeny (a West Pointer) and myself were appointed as a committee of three to look into the problem of getting volunteers. Everyone wanted to fight, but the problem was to find out how, when and where to begin fighting.

The first thing the committee did was to insert a small ad in the Paris edition of the New York *Herald*. The same day a long editorial appeared in the same sheet, telling every American in France who could carry a gun just what his duty was. The results were astounding. Next day, the applicants came in droves. The American Volunteer Corps seemed to be an assured success.

Then the French Government made a very diplomatic gesture by allowing us to drill on the grounds inside the Palais Royale. This was an unheard-of procedure. Imagine a group of American civilians going through infantry drill movements inside the Palais Royale. Queens, kings, courtiers, and the legendary noblesse of the past—the people whose names splash the romantic history of France, had sported their finery in that garden. In August, 1914, the walls of the Palais echoed the commands of Charles Sweeny, Esq., a soldier from West Point.

"Squads right! March! Column left, march! Left front into line, march! Company halt!"

The French looked on, that is, what few French were disengaged from the task of mobilization. They shouted cheers at our drill movements, and once, after a particularly difficult movement had been executed, a group of women broke into the Marseillaise. I have never known a thrill like the early days of that war—not even when I shot down my first German and was given the decoration—the much coveted Medaille Militaire; or the day I dropped three bombs on the Royal Palace in Sofia, hop-

AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS.

The American volunteers for the French army who have not already been passed by the military authorities are asked to present themselves at the recruiting headquarters in the rue de Valois at eight o'clock to-morrow morning.

Some of the volunteers have already been examined, as there were a number who wished to return to the United States on the Espagne in case they were not accepted. It is hoped that from 100 to 150 will be accepted in all.

The volunteers include four aviators. Among them are Mr. Stephenson McGordon, Mr. William Benjamin Thaw, of New York, and Lieutenant W. B. Hall, who has been flying for M. Maurice Farman.

Several American volunteers have come from the United States. They include Mr. Bertran Towle and his brother, sons of Captain Towle, of Larchmont, and Mr. Achilles Olinger, a teacher of French in Columbia University.

Such men as are fitted for special service will be assigned where they are likely to be most useful. The others will probably be kept together as far as possible. It is expected that they will leave Paris on Tuesday.

From the Paris Edition of *The New York Herald*

Proposes American Corps.

Comptoir International de Commerce,
26 rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs.
Paris, August 2, 1914.

To the Editor of the Herald:—

Dear Sir,—In the war of Despotism versus Equality, Justice, Liberty and Fraternity which noble France and her allies have undertaken to defend, I am prepared, like a true-spirited American, to offer myself as a volunteer, and abide by any orders the Ministry of War may give.

Surely there will be other Americans to share my sentiment—Americans who, apart from considering France a second Motherland, have for years enjoyed the great freedom and hospitality of this glorious Sister Republic.

Able-bodied American citizens residing in France who desire to manifest the brotherly feeling existing towards the citizens of France should not hesitate to enlist as volunteers.

Georges Casmeze.

Recruiting headquarters:
American Volunteer Corps,
11 rue de Valois, Paris,
Or Palais Royal, 168 Galerie Valois.

From the Paris Edition of *The New York Herald*

FROM 26 AMERICANS FIGHTING FOR FRANCE

Warm Clothing, Cigarettes, Tobacco, etc., Would be Welcomed by These Gallant Men at the Front.

Friday Nov. 27, 1914.

To the Editor of the Herald:—

Dear Sir,—Permit me your columns to inform well-meaning Americans, the American Red Cross especially, that here are twenty-six Americans, born and bred in the United States, who are [illegible] in need of several things. I will mention cigarettes, tobacco, sweaters, woollen helmets, warm gloves, chocolate, etc.

We are, all of us, well able to pay for anything, but, owing to prevailing [illegible] buy even a match.

Here is appended a list of all the Americans in this company:—

E. Morlac, corporal, California;
[illegible], private, New York;
A. Soubiran, private, New York;
A. Phelizot, pri[illegible], Chicago;
C. H. [illegible], private, New York;
[illegible], private;
J. Casey, private, San Francisco;
P. A. [illegible], private, Atlanta;
[illegible], private, Atlanta;
H. C. Collins, private, Boston;
F. Zinn, private, Michigan;
J. S. Carstairs, private, Philadelphia;
W. Thaw, private, Pittsburgh;
J. J. Back, private, New York;
B. Hall, private, Kentucky;
P. Dowd, private, New York;
D. King, private, New York;
J. W. Sanson, private, New York;
[illegible] Chatkoff, private, New Orleans;
J. Bolligny, corporal, San Francisco;
Charles Sw[illegible], corporal, Oregon;
Robert Percy, private, New Orleans;
Charles Trinkard, private, New York;
Alan Seeger, private, Brooklyn;
Bob Scanlon, private, Alabama;
John Williams, private, Rhode Island.

All these men are in the 2[illegible] Etranger, Batt. C., [illegible] Co., 3e S[illegible], Bureau Central Militaire, Paris.

We have all of us been in the first line [illegible] for thirty-five days and suffered some losses, J. Bolligny being among the wounded. Owing to the censor, I dare not mention our present place, but, believe me, it's hot and cold alternately.

Relative to the packing of any article that might be sent, I would suggest that the greatest care should be taken.

Hoping that you will allow this letter space in your columns.

E. Morlac, corporal.
For the American Volunteers.

From the Paris edition of *The New York Herald*

ing to finish off the Sultan of Turkey, the Kaiser of Germany, the King of Bulgaria and the Emperor of Austria (they were holding a conference that day); or the time in Petrograd when I read the Czar's proclamation of abdication—a large square poster written in many languages, a poster that upset the destinies of all Russia.

No! There never was a thrill like the early days of August, 1914, in Paris, and although I grow to be a kind of pacifist as years pass, I wouldn't have missed it for all the money in the world—not even for the Russian crown jewels, if they still exist, which I doubt very much.

Everyone of us in that puny little American Volunteer Corps knew that the archives of all the chancelleries of Europe were overloaded with long diplomatic conversations, secret treaties, and overlapping agreements. We weren't fooled into believing that the World War was entirely a thing invented by the Boche, but there was no getting around the fact that the Boche had been looking for a chance to start something, and now that the chance came, we Americans who had enjoyed the hospitality of France and had learned to love the country and the people, simply had to fight. Our consciences demanded it. Most of us might have been classified as soldiers of fortune; at least, we knew where thrills were to be had. And although we also knew that war was not all beer and skittles and that many lives would be snuffed out ere long, the really brave ones among us were ready.

But some of our number were not to be counted among the brave. For, after two weeks of training, when we were sent over to the Invalides to take the oath of allegiance to the French Republic, many of our good boys fell ill or had business engagements, or family matters or any one of a thousand other things that prevented them from taking the final step. We numbered about one hundred

fifty originally, but not more than half of that number fell in when we started on our march to the Invalides. I remember well how we crossed the Tuileries Gardens in a column of squads, Charles Sweeny in command. Along the sidewalks nursemaids with their little charges stared at us and the French gendarmes stared too. We were in civilian dress—just a little detachment of Americans, marching in a column of squads. But the names of some of those Americans have since become household properties. The poems written by one of them, namely, Alan Seegar, have been chanted throughout the English speaking world; for example, his "Rendezvous with Death," written in the trenches not long before his death.

For the benefit of certain friends of mine, I'd like to give the names of some of the men who went over to the Invalides and signed up in the Foreign Legion for the duration of the war. Here are a few of them:

Charles Sweeny, wounded in the Champagne offensive in 1915.

Jimmy Bach, taken prisoner September, 1915, while on a special flying mission.

J. W. Gansen, enlisted at the age of forty-six and proved a game, brave soldier.

F. Wilson, later known to us as Doc Wilson, our Chief Chemist.

D. W. King, wounded in action; later, gassed and almost lost his sight.

William Thaw, known to his friends as Bill Thaw, is, with myself, one of the two living members of the original Lafayette Escadrille. Bill Thaw saved my life one day in an air battle over Verdun and was nearly killed doing it, coming out with a terribly wounded left arm.

J. J. Casey, an artist by profession; wounded twice in action.

Parisians Accord Hearty Ovation to Departing American Volunteers

(PHOTO MEURISSE.) THE DEPARTURE OF AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS.

First Contingent of Two Hundred Men Leaves for Rouen to Join the Foreign Legion.

America's contribution to the ranks of France's helpers left the Gare Saint-Lazare at two o'clock yesterday afternoon for Rouen, amid scenes of wild enthusiasm. In the Normandy town they will be incorporated in the Foreign Legion, and after a month's training will be ready for active service.

Paris was stirred by their fit and light-hearted appearance as they swung along, the Stars and Stripes and the Tricolor carried side by side, and all along the route from the rue de Valois, where they assembled, to the railway station they had a triumphal passage, cheered on their way by men, women and children, who appreciate their courage and sympathetic co-operation.

There were about 200 of them, and before their departure they were entertained to déjeuner by their commander, Mr. Casmeze. They are a particularly fine lot of men, recruited from high and low, all keen and determined, and a credit to France as well as to the country which gave them birth.

To-day's contingent is the first, and it is hoped that others will follow. Further enrolments will be received at 11 rue de Valois on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from ten to four.

English Volunteers Leave.

The British contingent of volunteers left Paris yesterday afternoon for Rouen with the cheers of Parisians ringing in their ears.

To the number of about 200 strong they assembled in the Magic City, where speeches were made and cheers raised for those who had worked to make the corps a force in being, and with flags unfurled the volunteers marched, singing patriotic and popular songs, to the Gare Saint-Lazare, followed by crowds of friends and admirers on foot and in cabs. There were men of all classes in the ranks and their fine upstanding bearing excited the admiration of everyone on the line of march. Flowers were showered on them and kisses thrown and heartily returned.

At the station the enthusiasm was even greater. Parting greetings were exchanged, and a pretty little midinette who had no one to wish goodbye threw her arms around the first Britisher she saw, and kissed him right heartily just to feel she was taking a part in affairs. It mattered little that he was one of those who were stopping behind—she never knew.

The contingent will be incorporated with the Foreign Legion, like the volunteers of other nations, and they are all hoping that, when efficient fighting men, they will be moved to the field of operations.

From the Paris edition of *The New York Herald*

Stewart Carstairs, a slim, refined boy and one of the gamest persons I've ever known. He was a well-known artist, by the way, and always had a supply of cigarettes about him. I counted him one of my best friends. The cigarettes may have had something to do with our friendship.

H. Lincoln Chatkoff, a wild fellow who left the Legion and took up flying. But he was not an aviator and ultimately went back to the trenches, saying that he hoped to rest his nerves from the excitement of the air.

Paul Rockwell, a Southerner, desperately wounded in May, 1915. Later married to a very charming French girl.

Kiffen Rockwell, brother of Paul, later killed in an aerial combat September 23, 1916, by an explosive bullet in the chest. He was the second member of the original seven of the Lafayette to be killed.

F. W. Zinn, later one of the best aerial photographers in France.

Robert Soubrain, transferred to aviation and made a wonderful flyer.

George Casmeze took sick after joining the Legion and had to be left behind. He was, however, the original organizer of the American Volunteer Corps.

Edgar L. Bouligny, wounded twice in action.

Bob Scanlon, well-known negro prize fighter. He said he "liked to fight, but preferred to pick his own ground." He made an excellent soldier.

Dennis Dowd, a New Yorker, spent more than a year in the trenches, went through all the fighting of the early days and was later killed at an aviation training school.

George del Peuch. He was reported killed in the battle of the Somme. He was a brave man.

F. Morlae, went through the battle of the Somme and

later the battle of the Champagne; suffered from shell shock, and finally, after going home to his people in Los Angeles, died of a mental disease resulting from his experiences.

F. Chapdevielle, wounded twice in action.

Alan Seegar, whose name needs no introduction to the reading world. He was killed in the battle of the Somme. I soldiered beside him many a day and grew to understand his fine points. He was a strange fellow and unpopular at first, but how that boy could write!

René Philezot, who told us that he had had a vision of his death. It came true in rather an unheroic manner. He was killed by a comrade, and his death was promptly revenged.

These were some of the lads who joined up. A few weeks later, they had their baptism of fire. As we returned from the Invalides, a German aviator named Immelman was flying around over Paris dropping notes about the capture of Paris. If I had only had my Bleriot and a good Vickers machine gun, what a pretty mess I could have made of Herr Immelman and his slow, wabbly, little Taube! But the only thing we could do was to stand on the ground and curse.

Next morning we left for Rouen, where we were to join the Legion, the same day the government offices went to Bordeaux. It was a time when one wanted to go out with one's bare hands and kill and kill and kill. But all we could do was go away in the opposite direction from that of the war—go to Rouen, where we were to join the Deuxième Regiment Étrangère.

CHAPTER IV

Following the trip to the Invalides, there were several hours of frenzied packing. Mamma Pivot did everything she could to help, telling me about her Philip all the while. Philip had been in several engagements—rear guard actions, they called them, because by that time, the French Army was retreating.

When at last my meagre travelling kit was assembled and Mamma Pivot came to tell me au revoir, she kissed me very gently and told me to be a good boy and some other things I didn't understand. There was an exhilarating sense of youth about that old lady—her body had grown old, but her attitude towards life had remained young. Since the very first day of the war she had been rolling back the calendar until by the 25th of August, she was quite as active as any sixteen-year-old girl, even in such matters as kissing soldiers good-bye.

At the Gare St. Lazare our little detachment was causing a tremendous excitement. The waiting rooms, the entrances to the platforms and the platforms themselves were crowded with bon voyage parties. At least seven ladies for every member of the American Volunteer Corps had put in an appearance. Each one of them thought she was the only one. There were several unfortunate occurrences. There is a legend about what happened after the train pulled out—a legend involving hair pulling and other forms of female combativeness.

Personally, my experiences were very thrilling. I had just reported to the transportation official, when from a group of charmingly dressed people came Mlle. de L.

I shan't give her name because she has since married and her name is known to all Paris now. Her husband is an important person in the government. I had long been convinced that Mlle. de L. was the most beautiful girl in Paris; at least, as far as I could tell, she was. My decision, however, may have been influenced by our friendship, but even so, there were others who shared that idea. And then I was by no means an amateur judge of such commodities; I had seen female beauty in the South Seas where it grows wild; in Japan and in China; in Burma; in Russia; in Germany; in Spain; in Italy; in England, and through the length and breadth of the United States. But Mlle. de L. had something else—her eyes were a symphony in black, and her body was as delicately molded as a Tanagra figure.

There was an awkward pause after our first meeting. Then with her usual poised manner, she said:

"Bert, will you close your eyes and stand very still a moment!"

Somehow I knew what was going to happen. My arms felt quite limp. It's a failing I have in emotional crises; my arms feel as if they're detached. But I closed my eyes and waited. It seemed to be a long while, perhaps because I was anxious and besides that, I knew two hundred and fifty other bon voyagers and American Volunteers were looking on. Finally, she took my face in her hands and rising up on the tips of her toes, she kissed me one of those long delicious kinds of kisses, the technique of which is really only known to French women. It was like being in Asakusa Park, Tokyo, in cherry blossom time, or that very beautiful part of the first act of La Bohême; or April morning sunshine on the west side of Fifth Avenue, New York.

"I've owed you this a long time, Bert, you old darling.

This and a lot more. But for the present, you'll have to credit my account with just a little and take me on faith for the rest."

Take her on faith, the adorable thing! The idea of going away with the Foreign Legion and getting bumped off by a German 77 didn't matter just then. What mattered most was that two tear-dimmed black eyes would soon be staring after a train rolling out of the station in the direction of Rouen, and I'd be on that train.

. . . . . .

There was something exceptional about that trip. We did not ride in box cars. The official in charge of the station arranged to have passenger coaches attached to the Rouen Express. Even so, I didn't enjoy it. I couldn't forget what had happened back on the station platform—those lovely black eyes and the delicious detached feeling I had experienced in my upper arms. She had asked me to take her on faith. Faith indeed!

. . . . . .

At the time of the World War, the Foreign Legion was about one hundred years old. It is almost impossible to describe the conglomeration of races making up the enlisted personnel of that outfit. Almost every nation in the world was represented in 1914. There were entire battalions of Germans and Austrians. Some of the finest soldiers in the world and some of the world's most notorious criminals sought the protection of the Legion against the heavy hand of Justice. There were French deputies who had committed murder; there were highway robbers, deserters from West Point, renegades from Russia; Bourbon princes, Cossacks, negroes from Harlem, planters from the West Indies, absconding bankers from Chicago, New York, New Orleans. One reputable citizen was

there who had been three years wanted in Boston on a charge covered by the Mann Act. There were petty larceny thieves from Paris, heart-broken clubmen from London, French priests and chieftains from African tribes.

I could go on all night telling you all about the personnel. It's an endless yarn and some time perhaps I'll write off what I remember about it. In 1914, the Legion was in Morocco, as usual. It is said in the French Army that the Legion Étrangère is kept in Morocco so they can only steal from one another. If they allowed them to be in France during peace times, they might go to operating on the civilian population without any distinct advantage to the civilians.

The Second Regiment was all that existed at that time. Later, the First Regiment was organized and equipped, but at the beginning of the war, there was only one regiment and that was the "Deuxième Regiment." When old Colonel Passard lined up the Second Regiment, just before embarking for Toulouse, France, he told them that the Legion would be engaged in a war against the Germans. Any German or Austrian who wanted to fall out would be left in Morocco, but everyone who went to France would have to fight the Germans or face the firing squad. Eighteen hundred Germans, Austrians and Turks stepped out of the ranks.

That's why the American Volunteer Corps was welcomed so gladly. We were intended to help fill up the depleted ranks. The regiment was originally 4,000 strong. The average strength of the French Infantry Regiment was about 2,000. During the four years of the World War, the Second Regiment of the Foreign Legion was filled twelve times with fresh replacements. So we see that nearly 40,000 men served in the outfit and were

CASMEZE SWEENY CASEY HALL
CARSTAIRS THAW BACH

This picture was taken in Toulouse the first day these men were given their uniforms as members of the Foreign Legion.

either wounded to the point of being unfit for service, captured, or killed.

. . . . . .

When we arrived in Rouen we were given our first uniforms. They were stiff, tan-colored duck pants and jacket. They called it the fatigue uniform. Of course, we at once fell heir to a pair of brogans, and the tender feet among us were quite as promptly footsore. We waited orders in Rouen for four days and during that time our numbers increased to about 800. They billeted us in an old machine shop, where we slept on the stone floors on little straw pallets. The straw was thin and the floors were cold, but considering what happened later, our Rouen billets were quite grand, although we didn't think so just then.

Most of the Americans in the newly recruited outfits had been living the life of Riley in Paris. They were absolutely unused to rough food. But they became used to it and in pretty much of a hurry too. A can of soup, a slab of beef, a hunk of hard bread, and a sip of sour wine became quite a feast before long.

The trip from Rouen to Toulouse where we were joined by the main body of the Legion was made in the best accepted French Army style. We travelled *Hommes quarante, Chevaux huit,* and liked it, making the trip in something less than sixty hours. The American Volunteers tried to stick together. Under the leadership of one who thought he was a very wise young man, we climbed into a car that looked quite clean from the outside. I have never smelled anything like the inside of that voiture. They must have been carrying fertilizer or cow manure in that car ever since the day it had been built.

Our sixty hours were ghastly, but as I said, we liked it. There was no choice.

Our first glimpse of the Legion was something of a shock—the mixture of colors and races, the many languages, the rough-looking customers. Some of us wondered if we had been right smart in going over to the Invalides that day and signing up for the duration of the war. But we were in by that time and there was no getting out now. Colonel Passard would see to that.

It didn't take the officers long to put us through our training period at Toulouse. We marched a bit, shot a bit and did some bayonet practice. The gun I was carrying was known as a reformed rifle. The lands and the rifling inside the bore were almost worn away, but it was a good old gun and my marksmanship with that blunderbuss got me a promotion "poco pronto"; that is, I became a first class soldier (which in some ways compares with the first class private in the United States Army, except in pay). Four of us were promoted all in the same day—Jimmy Bach, Bill Thaw, Charley Sweeny and myself.

There are several other reasons why I respected that old rifle. Twice it was all that stood between me and a lunging Prussian Guardsman with a very ugly looking saber bayonet. And once, during a night patrol, when we ran into an enemy patrol and caught some of them between us and a light, something happened every time I squeezed that trigger. (I had learned trigger squeeze from my father back in Higginsville, Missouri.)

The first day I was seriously in the Foreign Legion, I encountered a Corsican named Passalaggi. He was an Adjutant, the highest ranking non-com in the outfit. Now this fellow Passalaggi, through being a Corsican and a fellow of short stature, thought he would some time be

another Napoleon. Never have I found a man I disliked quite so much as Adjutant Passalaggi. How he did ride us, morning, noon and night, for no apparent reason, perhaps, than because we were Americans!

But in the Foreign Legion, as in any other military outfit, the officers and non-coms who live through the battles are the ones who treat the men right. Many times the casualties among the commissioned personnel are caused by the men who are going over the top right beside the officers. It's easy to bump off a personal enemy in the heat of battle—easier than bumping off one of the enemy.

So, we gave Passalaggi all the room he wanted. We knew what he was heading for, and when he disappeared one dark night, no one asked any questions. Everyone knew or had a fair idea of what had happened.

After four days in Toulouse we were issued our regulation costumes—blue jackets, red breeches, blue sash, red kepi, and the short black leggins (we called them multiers). Besides this, we carried a shovel, a pick, a rifle, a canteen, 125 pounds of ammunition, a knapsack containing our emergency rations (which we had already eaten), a gamel (messpan), and a blanket. And was that a load! Hang it on your back some fine day and do a practice march of ten miles at a brisk step. After that, you won't have to take my word for it.

But we soldiered around Toulouse and found it wasn't half bad. All the while things were going very badly for the French Army up near Paris. The official Communiques told nothing much, but the letters we received told a lot. The Germans were at the gates of Paris. And there we were doing practice marches! We had enlisted to fight, not to do parade ground drilling.

But the old Colonel knew his Foreign Legion. He was

getting us ready to step in at the crucial moment. And he knew how to discipline that outfit too. They have since advanced his rank, and if I'm any judge of officers, he deserved it. I never will forget one night when we were still in training, the old Colonel came back to camp so full of cognac that he fell into a ditch and couldn't get out. One of the Legionaires who had broken camp to visit with a lady friend in a nearby village, passed the old Colonel and, taking pity on him, helped him back to his quarters. It is thought by informed persons in the Second Regiment that the Colonel might have died that night if he hadn't received the timely help of one of his men. However, next morning at first call, the Colonel was on hand. After roll call, he took charge of the situation and called for the man who had helped him the night before. The man stepped forward, thinking he was going to receive the Croix de Guerre or perhaps some even more important decoration, for his services. The Colonel gave him a long, cold look and said:

"What were you doing out of camp last night? Ninety days in the bull pen!"

That meant marching ten hours a day with full equipment and no shirking either. In this case, the sentence was never carried out, as we went to the front the next day.

CHAPTER V

From Toulouse we went a la "side door Pullmans Française" (forty to the car) to an artillery center near Camp de Mailly. By that time the tide of the victorious German Invasion had turned. Just why von Kluck didn't rush on into Paris, no one seemed to know, and since 1914, endless alibis have been advanced for the failure of the Germans at a time when they were on the very verge of success.

You-all could never imagine the wild rumors circulated in the French Army about the Taxicab Army and Joffre's victory at the Marne. My diaries do not contain such information and I am indeed sorry, because the current stories about the French victory were extraordinary, to say the least.

It was believed in some quarters that Jeanne d'Arc came back to life and led the French armies. Others said that the Crown Prince (who was on the southern end of the line) lost his nerve at the last moment and delayed things until the French could re-form their disorganized forces. To serious students and observers, there is no particular secret about what happened. The French, putting up one last stand, cut through von Kluck's unprotected right flank, and as the Germans had over-advanced themselves from their supply bases, they were caught and cut off by the most desperate fighting outfit in the world.

In the southern end of the line, General Foch (he had not at that time been advanced to the rank of Marshal), through a superior knowledge of his countryside, lured

thousands of Germans into the swamps east of Sézanne, and that was the end of the German advance.

Of course, there were taxicabs, commandeered by General Gallienni. And there was a lot of bad German judgment. But the Battle of the Marne was the end of things as far as a quick, decisive German victory was concerned.

. . . . . .

Our stay at Camp de Mailly was short. It gave me time, however, to find out a lot of things about the Legion, one of the most important being that the Legionaire always has a fighting side partner, or a Comrade de Combat. He fights with you, he marches with you, he eats with you, and otherwise shares whatever fortune or misfortune is yours.

My Comrade de Combat was an Italian. His name was Conti. I never knew whether Conti was his last name or his first name. He was simply Conti to me and nothing more. He told me quite frankly that he had been out of jail only nine days during the eight years before his enlistment in the Legion. He began his career as a child beggar and later became a bicycle thief. This was not an overly profitable business, so he turned ghoul, and although grave robbing was a bit messy at times, he made a good living at it.

After spending several short periods and one long period in jail, he decided to do a good job and then join the Foreign Legion. This he did, but the haul on his last job was not as large as he had expected, so Conti was broke most of the time except at pay day, when his pittance was quickly exchanged for cognac.

Having a few French francs left in the Morgan-Harjes Bank in Paris, I employed Conti to clean up my leather and polish my brass buckles. We called this kind of work

astiquage and Conti did well at it, receiving two sous per day, payable mostly in advance.

But Conti was an incurable thief. He would steal a part of my equipment every other day and sometimes had the nerve to steal the same piece of equipment two or three times in succession. Of course, his idea in stealing my side arms or my knife was to sell it back to me, but I soon got onto his game and after that we became very good friends. That Italian was possibly the most accomplished body-robber I have ever encountered. He could "go through" a dead German and come away with everything of value, hardly losing his place in a file of marching men. It was a science with him. He regretted, however, that the Germans carried marks instead of French francs—it would have been so much easier to spend them.

I remember well the time he swiped a box of chocolates Mlle. de L. had sent me. I waited until he was asleep, then I drew my knife and held it over his neck.

". . . Conti, damn your soul," I said, "give me those chocolates, or get ready to die. . . ." He handed them over and we were still friends.

The old-timers in the Legion, that is the pre-war personnel, were mighty glad to get back to France. They had grown weary of Morocco, of the heat and the sun and the sand-laden wind; the Berbers and their night attacks; the unfriendly tribesmen and the burnoused devils from the hills.

One Legionaire told me of the *cafard*. It's a disease one gets in the Morocco campaigns.

". . . some say it's caused by a cockroach crawling around inside one's head. Some say it's caused by the heat; others by the long marches. But I says they're all wrong. The *cafard* came over me one night when I looked up at the moon and saw for the first time that there

was a burnous around the bloody thing. That gave me the *cafard*. An' the Captain was smart—he sent me to the base for a rest."

But the old-timers missed the African nights. Any of you-all who know Africa know the beauty of Africa after dark. In northern climates the sunsets, the sunrises, the stars and the moon simply cannot compare with what one sees in African skies. Why, the stars seem as if they are just over there a bit, like lanterns hung out at a Japanese celebration.

All these romantic details came out a few at a time as we sat around our mess kitchens at night-time and listened to the fabulous yarns the veterans would tell. And you should have seen how the nationalities collected—how they got together and sang at night-time when the fatigue details were over.

On the trip from Toulouse to the front, there was much singing. Some folks have called us the "Men Whom God Forgot." Others have called us the "Legion of the Damned." But these are only coined phrases, made up to click together. We were neither forgotten of God nor damned. We may have been hungry and road weary and footsore and lonesome, but give us a *gamel* of la soupe and an issue of wine and see what happens! Morale is restored, groups are collected—men sing.

Soldats de la Legion
De la Legion Étrangère,
N'ayant pas de nation
La France est votre mère.

From Camp de Mailly to our next stopping place was about 165 kilometers, and we marched it in less than four days. I can see those fellows to this day plodding along with their 70 pound loads, Conti, Alan Seegar, Kiffen

Rockwell, Stewart Carstairs, big black Bob Scanlon, Jimmy Bach and Bill Thaw.

Bill had a tough time on that march. His feet swelled until he could hardly remove his brogans. But Bill was a good soldier and stuck to the marching columns like a man.

We encountered our first picture of the war just north and east of Sézanne, on the Sézanne-Epernay-Rheims high road. The countryside was littered with dead and unburied Germans and French. There were mountains of abandoned German material. Conti said he would be a millionaire in a week if he could only forage those fields. But we were going somewhere and although he did "go through" an occasional body, he could not break ranks and start a wholesale ghoul business.

Everywhere, cities and villages were wrecked and burned. The wheat fields were black and the bridges destroyed. This was a new kind of war to the Legion. They had had lots of experience with sharpshooters and mountain tribesmen, but a wholesale war where the countryside was destroyed, that was something new.

Our 165 kilometer march ended in the little village of Verzenay, which, by the way, is on the southeastern side of the Forest of the Mountain of Rheims. Crossing through the Forest of the Mountain of Rheims, we were constantly in contact with groups of German raiders who had been cut off from the main body of the German advance by the unpremeditated retreat. The enemy raiders were practically always Uhlans—Cavalry detachments who hid by day in the depths of the forest and came out at night to find food for themselves and their horses.

Once we encountered a German cavalryman hiding in a chimney. His left arm had been shot off and he had plastered it over with mud. Strange to say, the stump of

his arm was healing over quite nicely. He said he was afraid to come out and allow himself to be captured, as he had been told that the French would kill their prisoners. The forest around Verzenay was full of German Uhlans. We were told that all of them had not been discovered and captured as late as Christmas time, 1914.

One night when we were out on a little reconnoitering detail, several of my friends reminded me of how much we hated our Corsican Adjutant, Signore Passalaggi. The word was passed along, and it was finally agreed that we had put up with the "little Napoleon" long enough. So we arranged to have the soldier who walked behind Adjutant Passalaggi hold his bayonet in front of him, so that if the unfortunate Adjutant would stumble backwards, he would accidently be "run through" end to end. After marching along that way a bit, the soldier in front of Passalaggi stepped back suddenly as if he had seen something. This movement threw Passalaggi backwards and the bayonet did the rest. They never even went to the trouble of looking up the body. But next morning, one of the boys was engaged quite a long time sharpening up his bayonet. That's what one might call the workings of an oft-used unwritten law in warfare.

The new adjutant must have been informed in advance of what had happened. We liked him very much, and although he was killed in action some time later, we gave him a very respectable burial.

And that brings us to the end of Adjutant Passalaggi, the Corsican who wanted to be a second Napoleon.

. . . . . .

The evening before we left Verzenay, Conti came to me all out of breath and extremely excited. He thought

he had discovered the Kaiser of Germany, sitting in a little ditch not far away, smoking a cigar and waiting for dark to go forth on some mission of deviltry.

I, of course, thought Conti was having another of his pipe dreams, but I was very much mistaken. We crawled along on all fours to a spot which Conti indicated. Then through the branches of a willow tree, we saw what Conti had taken to be the Kaiser. It was a German Colonel, in full uniform, spiked helmet and enough medals to supply a battalion of heroes. He surrendered without the slightest show of a fight; in fact, he had been waiting for someone to take him in.

Through his conversations with some of our German-born non-coms, we discovered him to be a very rich and very important person in Berlin, a personal friend of the Kaiser and a regular attendant at the Court functions. He declared that the Kaiser had tried with all his power to prevent the World War, but the War Party, the Junkers, and Navy Party, the Annexationists and the Berlin-Bagdad Railway precipitated matters willy-nilly. Our old captured Colonel even went back to the time in 1911 when the German warship *Panther* steamed down to Morocco and entered the port of Agadir in what appeared a deliberate attempt to start something.

The British and the French and the Russians had just entered into the *Entente Cordiale*. The Kaiser wanted to find out just how tight this *Entente Cordiale* was and the *Panther's* trip to Agadir supplied all the information needed. The German Junkers, the War Party, the big gun manufacturers and others thought that war would be declared at once, but the Kaiser (according to the grey-headed old German Colonel) held the matter in his own hands.

Conti came off winner in the capture of the Colonel.

And the Colonel didn't seem to mind the removal of his personal property, his decorations and his gold braid, his cuff links, his watch, etc. He knew the war was over as far as he was concerned and he preferred being a P.G. (*prisonier de la guerre*) to fighting a war in which he had no sympathy.

This haul netted my Comrade de Combat more than one thousand francs' worth of precious metals, German currency and decorations. For some time I had great difficulty in making Conti polish my buckles and clean my leather at two sous per day.

CHAPTER VI

Four days after our arrival at Verzenay we left for the more active front. It was still dark when we hit the road. Our route took us through the city of Rheims. The Cathedral hadn't been damaged very much up to that time, but the city showed signs of the war, and the smaller places through which we passed were terribly shot up. What I don't understand is how some of those French people ever located their property after their villages were so entirely destroyed, every landmark being gone—no place for the surveyor to begin his task of laying off and establishing boundaries.

Ancient ruins are romantic; they seem to be monuments to something long since dead, but modern ruins are simply tragic: tools, furniture, clothing, pictures, statues, books, newspapers—all the evidences of recent life—but the life has disappeared and only the mute, lifeless remains tell the story. In some places the fronts of buildings were blown away and the entire household was open to the view of the passersby.

In other places everything had been burned. In several villages our men found placards telling of the German invasion and setting forth the demands of the German Army—so many francs, so much flour, so much sugar, so much tobacco, so many dozen eggs, etc.

And the bodies, swelling under the September sun! And the spiked helmets! And the smashed equipment! And the endless lines of ambulances coming back from the front with their cargoes of suffering and death!

God, how hungry we were! Our issue of food had

been mostly sardines for several days. I had taken to eating all the green food I could get my hands on. Occasionally, we would pass through a garden; that was a signal for picking up everything we could find and stowing it away without losing our places in the ranks.

I do not know who developed lice first, but I noticed them on that march. We called them "totos." They were devilish things and caused much suffering among our boys. But the lack of food was what troubled us most. We didn't mind fighting, but we did mind missing meals —it took the joy out of the war—this hunger business.

Passing through Rheims we headed in the direction of Laon, that is, northeast. As we approached the Aisne and the Aisne Canal system, several companies of our outfit were selected as a sacrifice battalion. We were sent on ahead with orders to contact the Boche wherever he was and hold him there.

But a Boche airplane flying overhead picked us up before we found the enemy infantry. Almost at once 77s burst over our heads. That was the first time we were under fire, and many of our good men went down before we could find cover. The German firing was very good in those early days and there were very few duds too. Later, when mass production was necessary, many of their shells were defective, but the 77s they sent over that afternoon were deadly and very well placed.

We were in open country at the time, mostly sugar beet fields. I remember well because I had uprooted one of the beets and was eating slices of it. Every time a shell came near we would duck—lie down or in some way protect ourselves from the dispersion of the shrapnel. It was interesting to watch some of the fellows. They would put their heads under the beet leaves, leaving their

backs high in the air. I was reminded of the legend about the ostrich.

Some trenches had been prepared up in the Aisne valley and we were ordered to occupy them. The Boche had other ideas. All that afternoon they gave us hell, first with machine gun fire and then with shrapnel or H.E. Just before dark I heard an agonized cry off to my right. I looked. It was poor old Conti! A shell had fallen quite near and a splinter of shell casing had passed through the upper part of his body. A hurried diagnosis told us there was no use giving him first aid. He died almost instantly. And his knapsack was full of gold braid from the German Colonel's uniform, to say nothing of the watches and German marks.

Poor old Conti! That was the end of him—top part of his body almost shot off! The war was beginning to come close to us. Jimmy Bach and I struggled along through the beet fields. It had rained only the night before and the mud was almost knee-deep in places. Besides this, there was a short-legged fellow in our platoon who was going "haywire." We had to almost drag that blighter to keep him from falling behind. Jimmy carried part of Shorty's equipment and still the poor lad whimpered and fretted like a sick child. We got rid of him very shortly. At first, he said the trenches affected his eyesight; then he said he had rheumatism. He finally graduated to being a telephone operator and from that was sent back to Morocco, to what we call the "Bat-d'Af." (Battalion d'Afrique.)

It was ten o'clock that night when our outfit finally piled into the newly dug trenches. The mud was more than knee-deep. The only rations we had had that day were a cup of coffee before we started and an issue of

sardines and bread about noon time. Our uniforms were sodden with perspiration and rain and mud. Bill Thaw produced a canteen containing about a water glass of wine. Do you know what he did with it! He divided it with me. Dear old Bill, he was a good soldier, and a generous devil too.

That first night everything was disorganized. We didn't know where we were or exactly where the Germans were. All we could do was to lie there hopelessly and wait until the approach of day would give us an idea of what our situation was. All that night the 77s came over and about every ten minutes a large caliber shell would fall. They were shelling the road between Laon and Rheims. That was a very important highway and the Boche didn't want us to bring up any reserves or supplies if they could prevent it.

The big shells (called "Big Berthas" at that time) whined and screamed overhead as they twisted their way through the air. They hit the ground with a thud and then exploded with a terrifying roar. Splinters of those big shells, sometimes five feet long, went shivering through the air, smashing things a hundred meters away. Just before dawn one of our Arabs went quite out of his head. We hadn't heard the words "shell shock" at that time, but I suppose that's what happened to the poor fellow. They took him away and we never saw him again.

With the first break of dawn we saw the seriousness of the situation. And almost at once, the Germans began to sweep our positions with 77s and machine gun fire. Our waist-deep trenches were made safe from shell fire in an incredibly short time. We dug with everything we could find—mess pans, shovels, picks, German bayonets, our hands—I'll tell you the dirt did fly. The story of how the United States Marines dug in on the west, back of the

Marne, in 1918 was very much the same way the Foreign Legion dug in on the Aisne in 1914. But we lost men before the trenches were finished and had to repulse several disconcerting trench raids at the same time.

While the trench digging was going on a few of us were indicated as sharpshooters and told to knock off some Germans who were calmly chopping wood about a half mile from our trenches. I believe we hit a few of them; at least, they gave up chopping. But later they were at it again—a few men, more or less, didn't seem to matter to the German Army.

By nightfall, we had our trenches rather well set. We had constructed dugouts and communication trenches. Everything was zig-zagged so that the enemy couldn't enter one end of a trench and enfilade us with his light machine guns.

I fell asleep standing up apparently. No one can imagine how fatigued I was. Some of the men lay down on the floor of the trench in the mud and slept like animals. A few of us had to stay awake to stand the watches.

About two A.M., I was sent back with a ration party. This party was made up of a Corporal and about ten men. We had to go four miles to the kitchens and bring up the food for the next twenty-four hours—coffee, cold meat, bread and wine. That's what we were supposed to get. Some days, perhaps forty per cent. of the time, we drew sardines and bread. Ration parties were sure of excitement; they were shot at by both friend and enemy. My job was usually carrying the bread—seventy-five loaves at one pound each—mud up to the knees, no lights, enemy shells falling here and there! If a ration carrier slipped and spilled his load, seventy-five men might not eat the next day. Oh, it was a jolly life, those trenches! I wish I could get it down on paper exactly the way it was, but

I'm afraid I can't. There was something besides the facts —something more than the mud and the blood and the grave-digging, and shell-shocked days and nights—something ghastly—something unbelievable.

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For the next eight days our life was mud, ration details, trench reconstruction, cooties (called "totos" in the French Army), German shells, trench raids and grave-digging. What a nightmare that first period of trench duty was! And those early trench raids and the night patrols! The rules about how they should be carried on hadn't at that time been created. We simply blundered along the best we could and buried the ones who were hit.

Corporal Wiedman was a native-born German. He had been "somebody" in the German Army once, but they had cashiered him and he joined up in the Legion, hoping that some time he would be able to get revenge on the people who had brought about his disgrace. Poor Wiedman, he came to a terrible death. It was on our second night patrol. We had foolishly penetrated quite far into the German side of No Man's Land when, all of a sudden, we realized we had been cut off by a patrol of Boche. I tell you it was a tense moment. We were not supposed to use our rifles except to do bayonet work, as we might have the misfortune of shooting one of our own men. So the bayonet it was!

That was the first time I ever fought in close quarters, and the emotions I experienced are as impossible to put on paper as sunlight would be. We had been told to thrust and draw out quickly, as the falling body of our opponent would snap off our slender bayonets. For some reason, there seemed to be a pause before our little mêlée began. I afterwards found that with the exception of air

combats this is usually true. Then the next thing I knew, a towering German was coming at me. My eyes having been trained to the darkness, I could see that his curved butcher-knife bayonet was aimed at my mid-section. I parried his thrust in an amateurish manner and let him have my three-cornered blade. He uttered a shrill cry and fortunately fell sideways; otherwise, I should have had a broken blade.

Do you know, it took everything I had to pull my bayonet out of that fellow's body. I learned from that first encounter, not to use the entire length of my thrust; four or five inches are enough to account for the most powerful antagonist.

All around me the combat raged. Corporal Wiedman's voice could be heard giving commands in his studied French. Suddenly, he broke into his native tongue. His usual composure was gone and he was unable to control himself to the point of speaking a foreign language. Our Boche enemies recognized him as a German in the French Army. And those greenish-grey figures! How they flew at poor Wiedman's body! In the splittest part of a second, they had him down and had bashed his head in with the butts of their rifles. This meant they wouldn't honor him with a bayonet thrust.

I caught my second German that night as he turned away from Wiedman's body. He had just given the *coup de grâce.* He made a pass at me, but I had him twice before he knew what was happening. He bellowed the single word, "Schweinhund!" and fell heavily across the body of poor old Corporal Wiedman.

We were supposed to bring back some prisoners, but the Legion had lived up to its reputation. There were no prisoners, nor had we lost anyone to the enemy alive. We had started out fourteen; eight of us came back un-

touched, two badly wounded, and four lay on the field dead.

As soon as the Boche got back to their trenches, they opened up on us with everything they had, machine guns, 77s, long range heavies, everything! Back in our trenches, the wounded were cared for and the others sat down to collect themselves and prepare for a counter-attack from the Boche side, but none came.

All my cigarettes were gone, but Stewart Carstairs passed me one of his. And that ended my first actual contact with the Boche.

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Next day it was terribly hot—one of the few really hot days we had in late September. There was a sickening, sweetish odor in the air. The old-timers knew what it was. They pointed to the bodies we had left in No Man's Land the night before. The bodies were swelling in the September sun.

CHAPTER VII

In the early days, we did a tour of eight days in the advance first lines and then went back for two days in the so-called rest trenches. The rest trenches were purely a device of the imagination. What we did was to dig reserve trenches all day and be shot at by the heaviest artillery all day and all night. We did eat a little more in the rest trenches, and after eight days of tightening one's trousers' belt to prevent the gnawings of hunger, the food was surely acceptable.

The new reserve trench system we dug on the first two rest periods was called "Piccadilly Circus." It was a very intricate system, very much like the network of streets in the medieval cities. We thought it was quite smart the way we had named the trenches after well-known streets. In some places the tops were protected—reinforced with heavy timbers all covered with earth.

It was while working on the Piccadilly Circus trench that Jimmy Bach and I started to smooth out the side of a little communicating trench wall. There was a slight rise just beside the entrance to our dugout. Jimmy and I got our picks and started to dig. After a few strokes Jimmy picked out part of a human head. We held a council of war and decided not to bother with artistic effects. The bump in the trench wall remained.

The construction of Piccadilly Circus cost us many men, as we were constantly under shell fire. The graveyard where we buried the dead who were in a condition to handle was in a hillside. Many of those poor fellows

were buried standing up—it was easier and quicker than digging a lying-down trench.

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As soon as we were back in the front-line trenches again, the regular grind began—trench raids, advance listening posts, ration details, grave digging, night patrols. The very first night of this second period a terrible thing happened. René Philezot was killed by one of our own men. The murderer was an Arab—a sort of chieftain, according to his story. He and René had had some words. Suddenly, the Arab swung his canteen around on its strap and struck René squarely on the head. René was killed instantly.

There was an artillery bombardment going on at the time. A short while later, the Arab who had finished René off was sent out on an advance listening post. He never came back. Three of us made a loop of heavy wire, dropped it over the Arab's head and pulled his neck back against the earth wall of the listening post. He wiggled a little and that was the end of him. René Philezot's death was revenged. The next night we filled in the listening post, Arab chieftain and all.

The day before René's death, he had sent the Red Cross 2,000 francs. He had told me several times that he had premonitions of his death. So we buried him. And now his body is in the valley of the Aisne.

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Next to the cooties and the German snipers, the trench rats were perhaps most disconcerting. Since my early childhood I have had an anti-rat complex. In the trenches where I couldn't get rid of them they made my life positively miserable. They nibbled on everything from dead bodies to sole leather. They made our nights

impossible with their scurrying and their squealing. I put my bayonet through many a rat in those first months of the war, and got almost as much satisfaction out of it as if the rat had been a Boche Colonel.

But there were some humorous incidents in trench life; otherwise, we should all have gone stark mad. One night I went with a patrolling party headed by Corporal Normac. The other members of the party were Thaw, Bach, Landreaux, Ollinger, and Carstairs. About three o'clock in the morning Corporal Normac sighted six shadowy objects. Everyone except the Corporal and myself thought it was a German attack and wanted to shoot. But we held out against starting things until we made a little reconnaissance. On close inspection we found the shadowy figures to be cows.

One of the bovines, an animal of male persuasion, went into action as soon as Corporal Normac came within range. The Corporal retreated, but reinforced by the remainder of his detachment, he herded the hungry beasts back into our lines.

We tried to trade five of those cows to a nearby outfit, but failed. We did slaughter one of them on the spot and the next day had fresh meat—the first time in a month and a half. It was a tough old animal, but there never was a filet Mignon, or a Chateaubriand or a Oiseau en Bœuf Lyonaise that ever compared to the flavor of that beef.

I somehow couldn't be very glad about it though, because I regretted René Philezot's death so keenly. He would have enjoyed a hunk of that fresh beef mightily.

I told the story of this lucky find of fresh meat to a civilian once. He had never been near the war.

"Why, Bert," he said, "could you cook in the trenches?"

"Cook! Did you say cook! Why, hell, man, we slept,

ate, fought, chased cooties and damn' near died in the trenches. What do you suppose could keep us from cooking a little! Surely not a general order!"

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With the first fall of snow several of us caught some rabbits. I knew how to make snares out of wire. Funny, though, about that wire; we didn't use the same heavy wire we had finished the Arab chieftain off with, but rather a lighter kind of wire. After we had caught about a dozen rabbits, they discovered back at headquarters what had been happening to the telephone lines. We had been using the lines of communication to make our rabbit snares. There were a lot of hard words, but the army is full of hard words, particularly during a big caliber conflict.

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Bill Thaw, Jimmy Bach and myself applied for aviation some time early in October. This bolstered up our spirits in spite of the life we were leading. From the 17th of October, 1914, until about the 15th of December the same year, I didn't take my shoes off nor change my clothing in any way. Not being able to stand facial hair, I used to shave in the remnants of my coffee. Several lads went insane from the cooties, but after the first few days I just thumbed my nose at them and let them bite away. I don't believe that for four years I was entirely rid of cooties; that is, for a long period of time. When Thaw and Bach and I left the Legion for the aviation section, our good-byes were pathetic. So many of our best friends were bounced off, and then I never was one to go in for good-byes anyhow.

PART II

CHAPTER VIII

The 14th of December, 1914, was a great day in my life. It marked my entry into the French Flying Corps. The notations in my diary for that day are amusing.

". . . Cock-eyed Carl, the Captain's Orderly, turned up a short while after daylight and told us we were wanted back at the Company Headquarters. Bill and Jim and I started back. Owing to the size of Bill's feet, he couldn't make any speed at all, and then Bill was worried. It was the Aviation physical examination we were about to take. Bill was blind in one eye. Aviators weren't supposed to be blind at all. Poor Bill, he worried all the way back to Banc Sablon (that was the location of the Headquarters. It was really the remains of a château; the cellar, in fact.). From Headquarters we went back four miles farther through the mud and the slush to a little berg named Cuery des Chaude Arbres, where the physical examiners were holding forth. My God, but Bill Thaw was worried." (Something is crossed out here; I don't know what it is. Perhaps it has something to do with Bill's eyesight.)

"The Aviation Doctor was doing business in a barn. He said, 'Hello,' and we said, 'Hello,' and he said that the war was terrible, and we said the war was hell; and he said, 'Just like you amusing Americans to make a smart remark' (bon mot). Ha, ha, ha. That ended the pleasantries. He then thumped us a little and asked some personal questions.

"When he produced a French newspaper and held it up for us to read, Bill Thaw almost died. But Jimmy Bach and I went first so as to have time to think up something. When Bill's time came I told the doctor that Bill hadn't been in France very long and couldn't speak the language; therefore, a fair test couldn't be made with a French newspaper. 'Well,' said the doctor, 'are his eyes all right?' 'Surely,' I said, 'best eyes in the French Army!'" And that seems to be the end of my diary entries for that day.

Needless to say, all three of us passed the physical examination and expected to leave the trenches at once. But at Banc Sablon we were quickly disillusioned. They told us we would have to wait for orders and that would perhaps be a week.

Three very sad young men sloshed along through the mud and half-frozen slush, back to the front line trenches. Our spirits were lower than the skin on a whale's belly. Here we were accepted for flying by the aviation doctor and being exposed to German machine guns and 77s until our blessed orders came through.

"It would be just like those dirty Heinies to write my name on a 77 and have me quietly bumped off before somebody back at St. Cyr gets good and ready to write out our travelling papers," said Bill. "But we're in the army now, we're not behind the plow."

Wham! There was a hell of an explosion right in our own trench. Looked as if Bill's prophecy was about to come true. But then we saw we were mistaken. Our inventor had had a premature blast of an infernal machine he was designing. It was, in fact, one of the first hand grenades I had ever seen. He was making it out of a tin can filled with slugs and rocks, with a small fuse sticking

out of one end, which he lighted from his cigarette. (This fellow came to grief, according to rumor. He threw one of his home-made grenades at a German one day and the German, being smarter than the usual run, picked up the tin can grenade and threw it back at the unfortunate inventor. After that, they buried the inventor.)

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As I said before, the 14th of December, 1914, was a great and very important day in my life. For although I did not receive definite orders to proceed to the aviation training school, I did pass the physical examination and developed mumps all in the same twenty-four hours. My jaws swelled until I looked like a person in a comic newspaper. One look from the Adjutant and he sent me back to the Ambulance Post with orders for treatment and hospitalization if necessary.

This time I didn't even have to walk through the mud. Just before I got into the ambulance, I threw my rifle away. That was a symbol—my war in the trenches was over. That old rifle had done its duty. I never saw it again.

It was nighttime when I crawled into the ambulance, which wasn't really an ambulance at all, but a damned old springless truck with an improvised tarpaulin for a top. The roads were crowded. We bumped and jostled along through the inky darkness. Truck drivers cursed one another in a novel manner; the transportation department had invented a unique profanity all its own.

Inside the truck, the wounded were coming off second best—one poor fellow was saying, "Oh, la la, la la; Oh, la la, la, la." And it wasn't a musical performance either. I had a little wine in my canteen and I gave it to him, then he changed his tune a little. "Oh, merci, merci, merci; Oh, merci, merci, merci."

I began to wish I'd walked, but then I tried to detach myself and not listen. Not an easy thing to do though, when a bundle of bloody rags is suffering its life away and repeating the same thing over and over and over.

All of a sudden, the driver of our truck got into difficulties. We were either side-swiped by an ammunition cart or hit a jolt in the side by some heavier vehicle; at least, we went over in the ditch—stretchers, wounded men, sick men and all. And what a howl those poor devils did put up. I made a little noise at first myself. I fell against one of the stretcher handles and the iron part of it went through my clothing and stuck into my lower abdomen. It was very painful for a few moments and rather bloody, but an ambulance man fixed me up with a piece of adhesive plaster and about ten minutes after we were transferred into another ambulance we found ourselves in the city of Fismes.

As far as my memory of Fismes goes, it was one grand hospital, or perhaps just a hospital and not a very grand one at all. I do remember that the doctors were busy and that a small hole in the abdomen and a pair of swollen, mumpy jaws didn't attract much sympathy. A hospital orderly did sew up my wound. He asked me if my nerves were strong; could I stand being sewn up without an anesthetic? I said I'd try, and pretty soon the place in my abdomen was all patched over and although it was painful to the touch, I didn't mind it much. Fortunately, it wasn't a very serious injury.

Toward morning, they attached a tag to my clothing and told me to get into a train bound for the southern part of France. This didn't suit me at all, I wanted to go home—to Paris, where my apartment was all ready and waiting, but the French medical authorities had ideas of their own. They were determined to send me to the south of France where I could recover from my mumps.

Now on the platform of the railway station at Fismes were many stretcher cases. As I walked among them, I noticed one of the poor fellows signalling to me with his free arm. He wanted a cigarette. We smoked together and talked a bit. I noticed his tag; it was for hospitalization in Paris. I asked him where he lived.

"Far south, Perpignan, in the county of Pyrénées-Orientales."

"Not so very far from the Mediterranean. Too bad they're sending you to Paris."

"Doesn't matter where they send me, I'm finished. Got it in the legs and the back and one arm. But it'll soon be Christmas time in Perpignan; we have quaint customs at Christmas time."

Here was my chance! I was reminded of the Turks changing costumes with the dead Russian in the Roumanian jail. I would exchange tags with my friend from Perpignan. My tag would send him south, not a great many miles from his home, while his tag would send me to Paris. Thereupon, we would circumvent the French Army. I always did object to doing things by the numbers anyhow.

I gave my wounded friend all the cigarettes I had, exchanged tags and shook his free hand very gently. He smiled at me as I hurried away in the direction of the Paris train. That was the last I saw of him. I do hope he recovered, although I doubt it very much. He was badly done in. I can see him yet, in the dim light of the station platform. His eyes were like dog's eyes, almost glassy looking, but there was still a smile left. By Jove, I do hope he recovered!

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The train dragged along all the rest of the night getting to Paris. We went by way of Fère-en-Tardenois, Château-Thierry, La Ferté sous Jouarre, and Meaux. Most

of those towns have since heard the footfall of many Yank soldiers. Up to that time, however, they were only unpronounceable places on the French map, as far as the American public was concerned.

After much backing around, we stopped and detrained in the suburbs of Paris. When I began to make inquiries about how to get into town, I was told that none of the sick or wounded would be permitted to enter the city of Paris until they were discharged from the hospital, and the hospital was in the environs of Vincennes. So I waited until no one was looking and then very quietly slipped away, down the track in the direction of the Paris wall. It was very early morning. No one took any particular notice of me. At the Port de Vincennes I knew there was a subway station. They call them Metro stations in Paris. No one could imagine how relieved I was when I slipped down the stairs of that Metro station and bought my ticket.

Walking had become a bit uncomfortable. The wound in my side was much more painful than it had been the night before. But my swollen jaws were receding. I did need a shave and twenty hot baths and a new outfit of clothes.

First, however, I went to the Equitable Bank and Trust Company and drew out some of the coinage of the realm. After that there was a square meal, some cigarettes and a shave.

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It might seem like boasting if I should tell you-all how many hot baths and how much French hair tonic and how many square meals went into my rehabilitation after leaving the Legion and the trenches. I felt like a kind of robber whenever I had a snail dinner or slept between

sheets. Of course, this period of relaxation was short and most of it was spent out at the American Hospital at Neuilly, where they very kindly treated me gratis, curing my mumps and seeing to it that the wound in my abdomen was properly healed over.

CHAPTER IX

About the 15th of January, 1915, I put in an appearance at St. Cyr. That was Aviation Training Headquarters for the French Army at that time. The Commanding Officer asked me for my orders. I told him I had none.

"What manner of soldier are you?" he said, and in his tone I could hear a very pronounced "if any."

"I, sir, am an aviator." This in my best dignified and offended Kentucky manner.

"Indeed! What Escadrille do you belong to?"

"I haven't been assigned as yet."

He then indicated that I say all I had to say for myself before he called out the guard and had me locked up. But after a bit, both of us pulled in our ears and he looked through his records. Yes, there was my name. Orders had been issued. And where were the other Americans, Mr. Thaw and Mr. Bach. I told him I couldn't keep track of the entire Foreign Legion and he rather agreed that it would be a heavy detail.

So, my name was entered on the lists and I was given the last complete flying outfit in the French Flying Corps. When Jimmy Bach and Bill Thaw arrived two days later they were outfitted in make-shift clothes and were duly sore thereat.

Since the summer of 1914, flying had made great progress, and although both Thaw and I had been aviators before the war and had many hours to our credit, we were required to go through the training school. I afterward found that this was not a bad idea. Of course, our progress was fast, but it gave us an opportunity to come in con-

tact with the new ideas, new models, new engines and, most important of all, aerial combat. (To most pre-war aviators, this phase of flying was an absolute mystery.)

From St. Cyr, Jimmy Bach and I were sent to Buc. I had been there before—during my mechanical-cow flying days. Jim and I beefed a lot at the idea of Buc; or rather, I beefed a lot and Jim joined me for good luck. But we stuck it out and lived to discover the wisdom of good fundamental flying training before going out to the front where the war was. The one interesting event of the day, besides what flying we did, was the get-together at dinner time in Monsieur Ciret's little restaurant. It was there that pilots, monitors (instructors), officers and aspirants talked flying—"barracks aviation"—"ground flying," we called it, and the term has survived to this very day.

Details of the early victories were discussed—how men went out with a short cavalry carbine or an automatic pistol and actually shot down their enemies. How two German airplanes were brought down by having a piece of brick thrown at their propellers by a French observer. How in September, 1914, a Russian named Captain Nesteroff deliberately collided with Baron Rosenthal, an Austrian, both ships crashing and both pilots "going west" as a result of this extraordinary bit of daring.

We, of course, had great faith in the machine gun at that time, but no one had been able to apply the machine gun to the airplane in an entirely practical manner. On the 5th of October, 1914, a French Sergeant named Franz and his mechanic named Quenault successfully used the machine gun in an aerial combat. They were flying a Voisin Biplane and the plane they attacked was an Aviatic, also a two-place biplane. This air-duel was recognized as the first of its kind. Both pilot and observer were decorated with the highest honors the Republic could give.

In February, 1915, Roland Garros, the famous pre-war French flier, perfected his steel band device which he attached to the inside of his propeller. It was a pyramid affair, deflecting any bullets which might hit the prop. Here we had the first attempts to shoot through the moving propeller—shoot straight ahead, with a machine gun fixed rigidly to the front of the plane.

At that time, Garros belonged to Escadrille Morane-Saunier 23, and it is said that when he appeared for the first time with his machine gun shooting straight ahead, the German pilots were dumbfounded. (In his experiments Garros found that less than ten per cent. of the bullets hit the propeller and his little metal invention prevented this small number from doing any harm.)

The improved synchronizing device called the "System Alçon" came into vogue a long while later. In the meanwhile, we used Lewis machine guns mounted on the top wings of our Nieuports, or an army rifle or an automatic or whatever we had handy.

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Our days at Buc were full of flying. First, the Rouleur, which was a clipped-winged monoplane with a three cylinder 20-horse-power Anzani motor. The fuselages or bodies of these ships were very short. Rolling them along the ground in a straight line (taxiing) was a very difficult problem. For apparently no reason at all, they would swing around on the ground and do what is called a "Cheval de Bois." A crashed undercarriage usually accompanied this gesture, and too many Cheval de Bois performances meant that the aspirant would be "radiated" back into the trenches.

From the Rouleur we graduated to a performance called "décollet." It means to take off the ground a few

meters. After this, one does a few exercises in what is called "pique" (which means diving the machine gently at the ground), then passed to altitude tests, triangle flights, petit voyages, and finally acrobacy and perfectionne. (Perfectionne is a group of practice flights intended to perfect the pilot's management and control of a certain type of plane.)

By this time Bill Thaw had already buzzed away to the front in a Caudron outfit. He was stationed down in the south end of the line. Jimmy Bach and I were finally sent from Buc to le Bourget where we flew the Caudrons, and ultimately to the front where we flew Morane-Sauniers. Our Escadrille was known as MS-38, and we were stationed at a field not far from Chalons-sur-Marne.

If I seem to slide over the details of training, it is because they were rather dull to me. At first, I couldn't see why I couldn't have taken a ship up to the front and gone to making the war the very first day. I soon found out why. The front was a wild place and war in the air was an entirely different matter from the peace-time flying we did *avant la guerre*. But training was just training. How I pity those poor Americans who came over later in the war and hung around at Issoudun and Tours and Chateauroux and even down in Italy waiting for a turn at flying training! They must have been mental wrecks by the time they had their first hop. It is rumored that those boys dug latrines and ditches and built whole camps too. Flying was not all front-page headline stuff for the ultimate American Air Service. We early birds were lucky.

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According to my diary, I spent several days early in April, 1915, flying new ships from le Bourget to our field

at Chalons. On one of these trips, I encountered a group of pilots at le Bourget, who were discussing the capture of Roland Garros. He had been using his steel pyramid propeller protector so successfully, and now he had fallen into the hands of the enemy, invention and all.

It seems that Garros had had engine trouble while on a bombing raid, and had been forced to land inside the German lines not far from Courtrai. He had tried to burn his ship, but he didn't have time. The Germans took him prisoner and for a long time reported him dead. Ultimately, the news leaked out—one of France's greatest pilots and one of the most important aeronautical inventions up to that time in the hands of the enemy.

Among the pilots who were discussing this depressing news was a young fellow, very slim, with a nervous high-strung manner. His name was Georges Guynemer. He and I were destined to become very good friends, and although at that time he was only a name on the roster of the French Flying Corps, fate held much in store for that youngster. Georges Guynemer, who later flew with the Cigognes (the Stork Squadron) under the able command of Captain Brocard, ran up a total of 54 confirmed victories and more than 200 encounters. How lucky it was for France that the recruiting sergeant turned Guynemer down three times! Imagine that lad being an infantryman! Impossible! But as a pilot, Great God! He was the symbol of the modern Joan of Arc. He flew into hell itself and came out untouched. He became a legend. The peasants in the north end of the line will tell you more about Georges Guynemer than all the biographers on earth, and after all, I'd just as soon believe them.

Nowadays when people go to Paris, if they're wise and know about the place, they manage to get over to the

Invalides and there they see the ship with the stork painted on her side. "Vieux Charles" (old Charley)—that's what Guynemer called his little plane. And over at the Pantheon de la Guerre, the traveller will find a portrait of the slim lad and a short paragraph about his being a hero of legendary power—a pilot who fell into the great wide blue heavens and was swallowed up by space.

Think of it—54 victories! Every schoolboy in France knows about Georges Guynemer. Why, they write little compositions about him and stand bareheaded before his picture and consecrate a day to his honor. By Jove, it's something to be a hero in France! But then, what a hero that fellow Guynemer was! What a hero!

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We were hard-boiled about the war at that time and heroism was a cheap thing to us. It was just in the day's work. René Philezot was the only one of our own immediate group who had been bounced off at that time. At first, we were unmoved by heroism, or even the prospects of it.

Jimmy Bach and I used to sit down and try to figure out what it was all about—it, the war, of course. You-all can imagine how much luck we had trying to untangle European diplomacy. As if it mattered a damn whether we understood it all or not! That's the way with soldiers though. There's a little bit of guard-house lawyer and fo'-castle diplomat in every good soldier man. Look for yourself if you don't believe me.

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People oftentimes ask me what my first impression of the front was; that is, the flying front. They want me to tell a wild tale about hairbreadth escapes and how I shot

down Boche by the dozens. But I can't tell a yarn like that, because in the early days, those things didn't happen.

To begin with, there weren't enough machine guns to go around, and we didn't have turrets to mount the bloody things on, and shooting through the propeller using the Roland Garros protector wasn't overly successful. So this is what happened. Our observers carried a French cavalry carbine in the rear cockpit with them, and also a Lewis machine gun. The pilots carried an automatic pistol and sometimes a cavalry carbine.

The Lewis guns were never satisfactory, not even the improved ones attached to the top wings. The wind resistance on the ammunition disk used to cause a jam and then it was like shooting a one-shot machine gun. There was no advantage to it at all, considering the added weight of the gun and the special mountings.

The very first day I arrived at Chalons-sur-Marne and reported out to the little flying field where MS-38 had established its headquarters the commanding officer, Captain Bouche, took me outside and said:

"See that smoke?" He was pointing off to the east.

"Yes, sir, I see it, quite clearly."

"Well, young man, that's where the war is. You have the orders for your reconnaissance patrol. Take your ship and your observer and go to it. Shoot down a Boche if you can, but remember you are doing reconnaissance, and the war is up there in the direction of that smoke. . . ."

Nowadays when I read books by young men who flew the war in 1917 and 1918, I am astounded at the improved methods of the Commanding Officers. According to the late-comers, the C.O's. used to take green pilots out and show them the front—take them out under a guard of three or four experienced pilots. We surely missed all those modern refinements in 1915.

I do feel sorry for the poor observers though; the fellows who put their lives in our hands. We, the green pilots, didn't know where we were going and neither did the observers. But that's the war in the air—intense excitement interspersed by long periods of idleness and comparative safety.

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That first flight of mine wasn't awfully unsuccessful. I can't exactly remember who my observer was, but I'm inclined to believe it was Lieut. Amrich. He carried the usual collection of rifles and I carried several boxes of fléchettes—steel darts, which we were supposed to drop on enemy concentrations.

Taking off from our field, which was just northeast of town, between the Rheims and the Epernay highroads, I flew along, gaining altitude and jockeying my motor to find the exact point where the mixture would fire best. Strange to say, I was flying over the very positions I had occupied in the early days of the Foreign Legion—the country on the south side of the Forest Mountain of Rheims, etc. Presently, the trenches began to appear. They were ugly looking ditches against the green of the early spring. We crossed the front not far from Auberive-sur-Suippe and then the fun began.

Being shot at from the ground was not a particularly new sensation to me. The Turks and the Bulgarians had both tried it. But this was something new. By that time, my Morane had gained an altitude of 2,500 meters. Angry, black bursts of anti-aircraft explosions popped here and there. I looked around at my observer. He was calmly making notes on his reconnaissance map.

Our objective that day was to observe any activity in the vicinity of Pont Faverger. We were to watch out for

the possibility of reinforcements being brought up for what was called the "1915 Spring Offensive in the Champagne." And there was activity, and troop movements, and supply convoys, etc. You see the camouflaging of roads hadn't been developed at that time. (In later years, entire roads were covered with a lacy kind of green and brown fish net, made either of cotton or paper.)

The French long range heavies were shelling Pont Faverger. To add to the difficulties of the Germans, we unloaded our boxes of fléchettes, but didn't waste any time standing around to see what happened when the darts hit the ground.

My first actual flight over the front lasted about one hour and forty-five minutes. We were supposed to make a flight of about two hours twice a day when the weather was good enough, and be ready for a volunteer patrol whenever something unexpected happened.

The fact that I got there and got back and dropped my fléchettes and my observer made his notations, was considered quite an ordinary procedure. The other pilots on the field didn't carry me around on their shoulders and the General, commanding that Corps, didn't decorate me with kisses and a ribbon. In the early days, one had to do what almost seemed impossible before any particular notice was taken. However, that night, I had the satisfaction of knowing that I was at last earning my salt, which was about fifteen dollars per month. I had graduated from a cow-pasture pilot to a recognized member of the French Flying Corps, and had made a successful flight against the enemy.

But what was that one successful flight to the many hundreds of flights I was to make in the next three years. How overly important things seem at the time, and how unimportant they become after we get the proper slant

on them. This is terribly true of flying. One's first flight, one's first bomb dropping, one's first aerial combat, one's first confirmation—it's all egotism, nothing more! When I think of the wonderful pilots who went out and never came back, day after day—some of the most marvelous pilots in all the world, and men from the very first families—I realize that a lot of the civilian flying nowadays that gets into the daily news sheets is all forced draft, to say nothing of being ancient history of the most antique kind. And having flown before, during, and after the war, I can say this with a considerable measure of impunity.

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Jimmy Bach, who was now with me in the MS-38 Escadrille, was not a ladies' man, but my partner, E. B. (a very well-known pre-war pilot) was, and I might as well tell the truth, I was, too. Of course, I've grown old since then and that makes a difference. But back in those happy days, in 1915, when life was short and a woman's fancy might cheer away the dullness and the ennui and the *cafard*—in those days we had a so-called god-mother, if we could find one and had enough of "it" to keep her.

E. B.'s sweetheart was named Mimi. She was very fair to look upon, but most important of all, she owned and operated a restaurant. There was technique in the madness of our love. As long as B. made soft eyes at Mimi (*fait les yeux douce*), B. and all of his friends ate, and for fear I should be misunderstood, they ate well!

After my usual habit in affairs of the heart, I allowed my feelings to dictate and rather overrule my practical nature (granting that I have any). My sweetheart, named Suzette, was extremely pretty; in fact, several

officers of high rank tried to take her away from me. Alas! she occupied a rather humble position in the social scale—she was only a washwoman, a *blanchisseuse*. But how that girl could wash! And how E. B.'s girl could cook! With the single exception of shelter, which was supplied by the army, and cigarettes, supplied by ourselves whenever we could buy them, we possessed everything life could offer.

Suzette had, however, several distressingly bad habits. First of all, she spent most of her time (when she should have been washing like a good girl) praying and mooning around over the fact that I might be bumped off. And then as she was going about collecting soiled linen or delivering clean linen, she used to stop at the Flying Field, wooden shoes and all—stop and ask the sentries and the mechanics all kinds of silly questions about the triumphs of her *petit poilu*. I cured her of these first two habits, but to the day of her death, she never gave up her desire to load me down with lucky trinkets, crosses and baubles. Some of them had been sent great distances to be blessed by the reverend clergy; others were pure superstitions, like a hair from the tail of a donkey enclosed in a tiny silken bag.

The one thing Suzette could never understand was how a pilot in the French Flying Corps could have so many soiled clothes. She, of course, did my washing—that was part of the bargain. And my laundry bag usually contained the washing for at least five men—myself and four of my flying mates. Poor little Suzette, she surely was an excellent laundress, and I was mighty fond on her too. (Back in Kentucky, we say "fond on" instead of "fond of.") But a German bomb caught her one night, and that was the end of Suzette.

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In the meanwhile, E. B. managed to entertain three or four of his best flying friends at Mimi's restaurant, at least once a day, Mimi footing the bill. That was usually for the evening meal, as we would have more time and could do justice to the excellence of Mimi's cuisine. And right here, I'd like to say something to the delicatessen wives of North America who find it difficult to carry on their affairs and still prepare suitable dinners for their husbands. I am wondering what these aforementioned young ladies whose chief cooking utensil is the can-opener would have done in a city like Chalons-sur-Marne back in 1914, with German air raids every night and a growing shortage of foodstuffs every day. I am wondering if they could have produced the chicken liver omelettes, the pastries, the stuffed fowls and the desserts that found their way to our private table in Mimi's restaurant. There was a reason, however, for the consideration we received from Mimi. The city of Chalons had been in German hands a short while during the Battle of the Marne in 1914. Mimi's restaurant had been "cleaned out" by the Boche. After they had eaten all they could hold, they "did in" the fixtures. Fortunately, the restaurant had not become a headquarters—that would have been fatal.

In 1915, it was just twenty-eight kilometers from Chalons to the German lines, and Mimi's kindness to the men who were protecting France from a further advance, was absolutely boundless.

(*A Page from My Chalons Diary*)

E. B. is a lucky devil. Mimi has bought him a new outfit—a black broadcloth suit with red stripes, cap, belt and all. It would be too bad to have E. B. finished off now that he has such a beautiful

lay-out of clothes. I'm on the verge of volunteering for his patrol, particularly, for his Special Missions (spy planting). Sue (Suzette) asks as many questions as ever. E. has the best of this sweetheart business. We have rumors of a new ship, faster than anything so far invented; machine gun on top wing. Could have had a Boche today but the gun jammed and the Boche seemed to have a hurry-up-date over in the direction of the Rhine. Most of the boys have their wind up on the Special Missions.

A few days after making the above entry, we stayed out at the Flying Field until nearly dark. When we were about half way between our field and the center of Chalons, we realized that the Germans were giving us a show—a bombing raid. They staged lots of sundown raids in those days. Hoping to miss the anti-aircraft barrages, we hurried back to the field, but Captain Bouche said there was no use, as the Boche had the altitude on us and by the time we got up to where they were, it would be dark on the ground. A night landing on the kind of fields we had those days was not just the safest thing in the world. The Captain was possibly thinking of the planes, as we were very short of equipment.

It was long past dark when we finally got back into town. The Boche had done good work with their bombs. We had to make a detour once because the narrow street was full of bricks from a demolished house, and in another place we saw the gendarmes and Red Cross people caring for the wounded. As we turned into the street where Mimi's restaurant was located, I had a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. Across the street and down a little way was Suzette's laundry. The street in front of the place where it had been was full of debris. A

crowd of people could be seen against the faint glow of a lantern.

Red Cross stretcher-bearers were carrying out the wounded. Our motor car stopped. I jumped out as quickly as I could. Inquiries were unnecessary. The crashed-in building and the row of bodies told the story. Suzette was among them. We had planned a gala dinner that night at Mimi's restaurant. The bombing raid had caught Suzette attired in what she considered to be a very lovely evening costume. Now she was dead. Fortunately, the explosion had not disfigured her face. There she lay, still very pretty. Suzette dead! Presently Mimi came up, running, all out of breath, her eyes brimming with tears. My partners were very considerate of me. They spoke very kindly, and we planned to avenge Suzette's death next day.

There was no *soirée de gala* that night. The evening meal was scarcely touched. Next day the bodies were buried. Mimi looked after Suzette. To our surprise, the little washwoman had quite a sum of money in the bank of Chalons. She was given a very respectable funeral.

Suzette was the first woman friend of mine to be finished off in the war. One could understand men getting killed, but Suzette's death brought the war very close to me, and I might say that the reconnaissance, the combat and trench straffing I did in the days that followed was done with more care, with more attention to results.

I remember well a few days after Suzette's death a volunteer was called for. It was a particularly dangerous piece of reconnaissance and artillery recalage at a very low altitude. I stepped forward, and with Lieutenant Manigal, who volunteered as my observer, hopped off.

The weather was very cloudy and the ceiling was low. We crossed the lines so low that they shot at us with

everything they had. Our wings were punctured in a dozen places. Under cover of the fog and the low clouds the Germans were bringing up some reinforcements. Headquarters had been advised of this through the Intelligence Department. Finally, after almost giving up our search, we discovered that the report was well founded. At a point about thirteen kilometers east of Sommepy, the roads were jammed with all kinds of traffic, but mostly marching columns. This was our meat.

We signaled our batteries and the long-range gunners, who knew to a meter the location of every square foot of that country, opened up. The slaughter was something awful. Whole columns of Boche disappeared and wagon trains were splintered into mere heaps of tangled twisted junk. By flying back and forth, we gave the batteries closer ranges and they regulated their shots with an amazing precision. The road I am telling you about runs perfectly straight after it gets out of Sommepy—perfectly straight for a long, long way. It was easy for the gunners, once they had the location right and left, to raise or lower the trajectory of their shots and sweep the road for miles each way.

The ground rocked underneath us. We were feeding the old Boche a little of his own blood and iron and making him like it too. We wanted to stay and see the end, but our gasoline was running low and it was getting dark, so we skimmed along under the edge of the clouds, and dodging the fire from the ground, made our way back to camp.

This episode will give the civilian reader an idea of how important airplanes are in modern warfare. One airplane (and not a very good one, at that), one pilot (more or less a green one) and an observer, with the cooperation of the artillery, breaking up the most carefully

laid plans of the enemy; perhaps, saving the lives of hundreds of our own men and costing the enemy great losses in both man-power and equipment, this last being most important.

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This time the Commanding Officer was pleased and said so. The General also sent us his very best wishes. I had had my own axe to grind all the while, and that was the death of poor little Suzette. The revenge we took was satisfying, but even so, my nights and the rainy non-flying days that followed were rather dull. I missed Suzette, in spite of her deplorable manners. Of course, when E. B. was transferred, I came into the possession of Mimi and that stroke of fortune helped a little. (Here's a diary note on the subject of the *restaurateuse extraordinaire.*)

I've been holding down the restaurant since E.'s transfer. Mimi is really a dear, but not as good looking as Sue. E. B. told her that I was frightfully unhappy over Sue's death and Mimi, to cheer me up, has bought me a new outfit, the Black Engineer's outfit, with the red stripe. I look very well in it, and am planning to have my picture taken. Mimi is as good a cook as ever, and now that the vegetables are coming in, I really enjoy the cuisine more than before. What would we do without these women! I wonder. My, how I do miss Suzette!

CHAPTER X

The springtime of 1915 was loaded with surprises. First and most important of all was the sinking of the *Lusitania*. That was May 7, 1915. We had the news next morning and were naturally ready to go out and do battle against the entire German army, single-handed. The folks back in America who were quietly living out their civilian lives never really understood the *Lusitania* disaster. Of course, the papers were full of it—headlines, pictures, names of the victims—with wild statements about what the State Department would do next day. But to us who were actually engaged in the war—we saw red!

And Count von Bernstorff's statement did very little to quiet us down. Here's what the Count said, as well as I can remember:

"The Americans have only one life interest—peaceful money-making." And there we were making fifteen dollars a month, fighting as long as the wings would stay on those anemic little Morane-Saunier airplanes.

Some German prisoners were captured a short while after the *Lusitania* disaster. When the prisoners were searched for fire-arms and other weapons, a large iron medal was found. It was about two and one-half inches in diameter and had apparently been struck off to commemorate the sinking of the great liner. It was executed in rather a modernistic manner, one side showing a ship sinking. The decks were loaded with war munitions. The other side showed a ticket booth with a skeleton selling tickets to a long line of prospective passengers. Over the top of the ticket booth was the single word, "Cunard."

Neither the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the medal commemorating the same, nor Count von Bernstorff's statements about Americans helped matters very much. Most of us looked upon the sinking of the *Lusitania* as a symbol, and although we didn't have time to unravel the growing tangle of international diplomacy, we rather thought the United States would get involved sooner or later. What we hoped was that it wouldn't be too late!

As my yarn about this man's war unfolds, you-all will find that the American participation in the war had many forerunners—many men who found it impossible to be neutral, even though they had never been out of the United States, and had no very definite blood relation to the allied countries.

Another thing that happened during the spring of 1915 was a series of test offensives—experimental battles, so-called. During February and March the French had one in the Champagne. The British tried one at Neuve-Chapelle a little later. In May, the French staged the battle of Artois and the British pulled off another at Festubert, May 16th to 24th, 1915.

Every one of these offensives was more or less unsuccessful when one considered the loss of men. I began to congratulate myself that I had gone into the flying corps. There was a certain personal element in air fighting, and not nearly so much dependence on staff officers and headquarters.

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The big excitement of July, 1915, was the Nieuport plane which gave promise of being the slickest thing in the air. It was so far only a promise. The early Nieuport (known to us as the "flat-winged Nieuport") could not climb. The Germans were always above us. For that reason, the flat wing was washed out and replaced by

a curved- or cambered-wing machine, which proved to be what its forerunner should have been.

Jimmy Bach and I were given orders to go up to Issy les Mouleneaux to the Nieuport Factory and get a pair of the new machines. The orders took us by way of Paris and that was, of course, hard to take. Jim and I had homes in Paris and lady friends—I possibly came in stronger on the lady friends than Jim did, for as I told you a while ago, he was no ladies' man. But Paris was dark, and by no means the happy place it had once been. Everywhere there were wounded. The rationing of food was rumored. One thing we did encounter on that Paris trip was a group of pilots who were detailed to the aerial protection of the capital—they led a hard life and we gave them the cold shoulder they deserved. In justice to them, however, I really believe that they were not awfully happy with their job. Most of them wanted to make the real war. As it was, they were looked upon as chocolate soldiers.

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At Issy les Mouleneaux, Jim and I discovered that we were the first pilots to take the new Nieuports up to the front. And I must admit they were cocky looking ships. The pilot sat aft and the observer forward. There was a round hole in the top wing, through which the observer performed his mysteries, shooting, spotting targets, taking notes of enemy operations, etc. There was a kind of mounting for the machine gun too, but not a fixed mount.

We only used those flat-winged Nieuports one month in the MS-38 Escadrille, but during that month I had my first successful brush with the Boche. And although I didn't actually shoot down the German plane, I forced it to land inside our lines. Thereupon, we took two prisoners and came into the possession of an unscratched Al-

THE FAMOUS FLAT-WINGED NIEUPORT

The observer did his shooting through a round hole in the top wing. The machine gun shot over the propeller. The pilot sat aft of the observer. It was not a successful ship.

batross. Was I glad? And did I fly that Albatross machine around before the admiring eyes of my brother pilots? I'll say I did!

It happened in the early morning, very early, in fact—almost too early for a sleepy-eyed aviator. I took Leon Mourreau along as my gunner. Leon was my mechanic. It was a good idea to take your mechanic over with you occasionally; it gave him an idea of the risks you were running, and thereafter he was more than careful of the motor and the plane.

We had moved our flying field a little nearer the lines; that saved us some gasoline and time in getting to and from the patrols. The new field was located at the little village of la Cheppe. Of course, we still looked upon Chalons as headquarters and marched in to Mimi's restaurant every evening in a column of squads, all hungry and ready to put on the feed bag.

Leon and I took off on this particular morning with the idea of doing a short patrol before the usual "sortie" of the morning. A little river called the Noblette ran along on one side of our field. Presently, it sped past us and in a few minutes we were over Suippes, where we took the direction of the roadway to Sommepy. Our objective was St. Etienne-à-Arnes. As we approached the front lines, which ran about two kilometers this side of Sommepy, Leon and I caught sight of a German plane flying along at exactly our altitude. The pilot, as I afterward discovered, was an amateur, and the observer must have been near-sighted; this last I was never able to determine, as by the time we got to the poor fellow, he was rather badly shot up.

It looked too easy. Leon made motions. I was all in favor of a little fight, particularly, as the German plane looked as if it was out on a photographic mission. I swung

around to the right, and half a minute later Leon drew the bead on the observer's cockpit. After the first burst of our machine gun, the observer crumpled up and sank down out of sight. Thereupon, the German pilot came to life and seemed to be terribly mad. I flew up very close beside him and indicated that he fly on down to our side of the lines. To back up my directions, Leon shot a few scattered bursts of machine gun fire at the unfortunate Boche.

We hadn't damaged the plane the slightest bit. There were a dozen bullet holes in the fabric, but every plane at the front had a few such souvenirs. It was now only a problem of finding a suitable place to make a landing and be sure that the Heinie pilot didn't destroy the plane before I either bumped him off or took him prisoner. As we passed over the village of Suippes, I indicated a field south of the railway not far from the main road. The German apparently understood and proceeded to make a very fair landing. Through watching the enemy plane, I didn't take very careful notice of the ground and was forced to make another tour of the field before making my landing. When I finally jumped out and ran over to the German plane, I saw the pilot was about to apply a lighted match to the under side of the fuselage, the portion just beneath the engine. The fabric at this point is always oil-soaked and will burn very easily. About twenty meters away lay the observer; he seemed to be breathing his last.

It was a time for quick action. The thought of that beautiful German Albatross airplane going up in smoke was particularly distressing. Our squadron hadn't brought home so perfect a prize, and now it was about to be burned by a fellow whom I might have bounced off in the air.

The German saw me coming. He did his best to hurry

up the fire, but I swung one terrific right and landed my fist on the point of his chin. There was no bonfire that day. Some French ambulance men took care of the wounded observer and when the pilot regained consciousness, a detachment of French soldiers made him their prisoner. And was that pilot sore! He raved like a wild man! The idea of a German officer being struck in the face! The idea of carrying on warfare with one's fists! It was inconceivable!

I was merely amused. All the while he was raving, I was examining the plane. If he hadn't stopped, I think I might have lost my patience and finished him off for good, but I didn't. What was the use—he would make a good workman in the French labor battalions. I did explain to him, however, that I had used my fist in lieu of my automatic because I wanted to give him a sporting chance. I might have finished him off in the air, or from a safe distance on the ground. But the German idea of a sporting chance didn't seem to involve a fist fight.

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When I landed the Albatross on our field at la Cheppe, there was what the French call a crisis of excitement. The news of the encounter had been telephoned, had been sent by wireless, had been sent by courier, and brought by word of mouth. Best of all, Marshal Joffre had witnessed the entire procedure and was pleased no little bit. It was the first combat he had seen up close—not that it was much of a combat, but that it turned out so successfully for the French.

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It was like steering an ice-wagon to fly that Albatross. Where the controls on the Morane-Saunier or the Nieu-

port moved an inch, the controls on the Albatross moved a foot. And the thing smelled too—smelled like some kind of stale, rancid oil. The greatest disadvantage about flying it though was the fact that one could never quite convince the French anti-aircraft batteries that there was a friendly pilot inside. Those frogs would take a pot shot at me and I'd have to zig-zag like hell to keep from having my treasure destroyed on the very verge of delivering it to the headquarters up at Le Bourget. I'm told that they put that Albatross over in the Invalides later, but we surely had a lot of fun out of it at la Cheppe, flying it around the field, trying out the controls and examining the construction. Incidentally, my mechanic came in for no small part of this catch, and he deserved it too. But he was a modest fellow, and not nearly as good a talker as I was. Talking up one's exploits had its advantages, even in a big-caliber war.

CHAPTER XI

There were some mighty fine pilots in the MS-38. Captain Bouche, our Commanding Officer, was, for example, one of the hardest flying men in the service. He never asked a pilot to do anything in the air that he (the Captain) was not willing and able to do himself. And Lieutenant d'Harcourt, who later became the Commanding Officer of the N-103 Squadron. And Lieutenant Harteaux, who as a member of the Cigognes (N-3), ran up a staggering total of victories. And E. B. (I've already told you perhaps too much about E.); and Sergeant Mangot, who was taken prisoner at the same time they captured Jimmy Bach; and Adjutant Bayer, who was killed at Verdun. These were some of the men who were associated with my original Escadrille and a mighty fine lot they were.

Speaking of Jimmy Bach's capture, I am reminded of my spy-planting experiences, one of which was successful. The other was almost tragic, that is, from my point of view.

It was some time in the early part of August. A volunteer was called for to go on what was known as a Special Mission. That meant planting a spy behind the enemy lines. We didn't use the Nieuports for this work, because the Moranes were steadier and had a lower landing speed. The objective in these spy-planting flights was a little field about four kilometers from the Belgian frontier. To be exact, it was a short distance north of the city of Rocroi, and 100 kilometers, as a crow flies, from our field at la Cheppe.

We hopped off before daybreak, the spy in the back seat where the observer usually rode. He carried a box containing four carrier pigeons. These he would release with a message when he had completed his mission. He would indicate the day, the hour, and the place of meeting and we would send a plane back to pick him up.

That first trip to Rocroi was uneventful. I landed, the spy jumped clear of the plane, fished out his pigeon box and ran away into the nearby woods. After that, I turned around and took off. On the way back, I might have done the old Boche a lot of damage if I had had a machine gun, but the Moranes were not equipped for a fighting pilot, so I had to content myself with flying back to la Cheppe as safely and as quickly as possible.

Three days later, a message came in from the Intelligence Headquarters that my spy was ready to return and I was given orders to pick him up. This time the trip was made late in the evening. When I arrived at the Rocroi field, I spiraled down from a very high altitude and cut my motor so as not to make any unnecessary noise. Just before I touched the ground, I cut my motor on again and at first the damned thing didn't take. It was a trying moment, but after a turn or two it fired and I knew I was safe on that score. I landed as I had been instructed, but there was no spy to be seen. I was about to take off again when I saw a wild-looking thing running through the grass.

It was apparently a German soldier. Before I could open my motor and get under way the running figure had overtaken me and with one bound he landed himself in the rear cockpit. I didn't know whether to turn around and let the fellow have a clip of shots from my automatic or just what. Then I heard his voice. He spoke in French. It was my spy all right; he had appropriated a

German uniform for safety's sake, and hadn't had time to change.

Back at la Cheppe, I told him how nearly he had come to being bounced off, but he laughed. That was part of his day's work. And, by the way, he had done a beautiful piece of spying. I tried to make him tell me his name, but he wouldn't. We were convinced that he was an important somebody in the counter-espionage section of the French spy system.

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In August, after we had been supplied with the improved curved-winged Nieuports, Lieutenant le Cocque and I shot down our first German in flames. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, August 21, 1915. The air was perfect and the fighting was good. There were lots of running scraps, but nothing serious until this one Aviatic came in close for what seemed to be a show-down.

We had been doing a tour of observation and were returning at the time. Our gasoline supply was naturally low, but if anybody wanted to fight, we were ready. The pilot of that Aviatic was an experienced fellow. We flew around each other, waiting for a chance to open up, each hoping the other would make a fatal blunder, do a tiny bit of bad flying and that would be the end. Lieutenant le Cocque was ready at the guns and so was the German observer.

My idea of attack has always been from the top down, but as we were almost up to our possible ceiling, there was no chance to get above this fellow. Climbing in very high, thin air is not as easy as it is down near the earth where the air is thick.

Finally the German observer fired a burst. It cut through our fuselage about three feet behind the rear cockpit. I pulled off as quickly as possible and apparently

while the Germans were congratulating themselves in having got in the first blow, I caught them unawares. In what seemed to be half a second, Lieutenant le Cocque fired a long burst, which did something to the engine, besides damaging the state of mind inside the German plane.

From an altitude of 4,000 meters down to within 200 meters of the ground we combated, saving our ammunition for the best possible opportunity. After our first burst, Lieutenant le Cocque and I had the advantage. The Germans were trying to disengage themselves as skillfully as possible. They wanted to get away without giving us an opening. Finally, at 200 meters, they made a break. I swung around sideways to give le Cocque the best firing position and he did the rest.

The German plane buckled in the middle, crumpled up and burst into flames. It fell about a kilometer from the city of Sommepy, right in the middle of the French front line trenches. This made confirmation an easy matter. As soon as the enemy plane started down, all the German land batteries opened up on us, and we had to do a swell job of dodging to get back with our skins.

During the combat we had received about ten bullet holes, but during the anti-aircraft and machine gun barrage from the ground, we received a hundred, and they weren't all small holes either—anti-aircraft bursts sometimes throw hunks as big as a small-sized head of cabbage.

But we had a confirmation—le Cocque and I did—and that was worth flying through a dozen anti-aircraft barrages.

Two days later, a rare thing happened. I had just returned from my morning patrol when a mechanic came

running, out of breath, all excited. At the same moment, a message came in from headquarters; a German plane was spiraling down right over our landing field. We expected that he would either drop bombs or open up on the hangars with his machine guns. But then we observed that his propeller was not moving. We knew we had him cold once he landed. Several machine guns were trained on him and we waited. We knew that unless he changed his direction, any bombs he might drop would do no damage; they would only make a few holes in the countryside, and that countryside of ours had been shot at and had had holes made in it by experts, so we didn't worry much.

Finally, the Boche landed. The plane was a bright new Albatross, and a beauty; even newer and prettier than the one I had captured. The French soldiers who guarded the field rushed over in the direction of the plane with their guns ready to do business, but the Germans merely smiled and asked for the Commanding Officer.

Captain Bouche stepped forward, still wondering what was about to happen. The German pilot spoke perfect French. He explained that he was out of gasoline and thought that it would be a sporting thing if the Captain would supply enough to take their Albatross back to the German lines. They also proposed, in lieu of the fact that the Captain would not agree to the first proposition, that a French pilot and an observer take off and do battle with the German plane after it had been re-gassed. If the German plane came off first best, it would be allowed to go back to Germany untouched.

Our Captain smiled in his wonderfully gracious manner and said that it was impossible to entertain either proposition. He would like to do the sporting thing, but

Headquarters wanted to examine the latest Albatross. So we took both of them prisoners and rolled the nice new machine back into our only empty hangar.

Now comes the best part of it. The observer had been quiet all the while. Finally, he spoke up.

". . . so you're an American!" he said, addressing me.

"Christ," I said, "how'd you know?"

"Why, goddamit, I could tell an American in hell. I know you. I remember having seen you at Palm Beach in 1908. You were driving a racing car then. I remember you well."

"You're right, boy," I said. "By God, you're right. What the hell are you doin' in the Boche army?"

"Oh, I don't know. You see, my father's German and my mother's American and I'm nothing. So when the war broke out, the old man ballyhooed me into enlisting in the Aviation Section. It's all over now as far as I'm concerned and I'm glad of it too. Understand, I'm not afraid to die, but, hell, I believe we're wrong."

The other officers looked on with wide-eyed amazement.

"It's damned nice of you Americans fighting for France though, and I can understand why you're doin' it too."

We fed them and sent them off to the concentration centers, but not before the half-breed German-American had told us quite a lot of valuable things about the Boche flying outfits, the "Jagstraffels," as he called them. I was sorry for that poor bum. But that's what he got for having a German father; a fellow ought to look out for such things. It complicates matters so much, particularly at war-time.

Diary note, la Cheppe, N-38, September 1, 1915

. . . and just over the way about four kilometers, there is a Groupe Bombardment Voisin, where a rather tragic thing happened yesterday. They had been recently supplied with liquid air bombs. A group of pilots and mechanics were standing near a stack of these blooming things when one of them went off, just by itself, without any contact or fuse-pulling or anything—just went off. They say it was because the sun had warmed them up. At any rate, the whole damned stack of bombs went off ultimately and there were some casualties among the pilots. Liquid air bombs have been washed out, thank God! We never did think they were overly safe.

Diary note, September 2, 1915

There were some German observation planes up two days ago and one of them dropped a glove. It was a well-made, fur-lined glove, and I got it for a souvenir. Today another glove fell on the field, not far from the hangars. There was a note attached to it.

(Translation from very good French.) "The finder will now have a full pair of gloves. The original owner wishes the finder good luck and assures him that the one remaining glove was of practically no use to the original owner."

So now I have an excellent pair of Heinie flying gloves, fur-lined, very soft, and nicely made. Very nice of these Boche to supply me that way and for so very little too.

In the middle of September we got our first single-seater Nieuports—thirteen meter affairs, with Lewis machine guns on the top wing. Those Lewis guns were

never one hundred per cent. successful, but on the single place ships, they gave the pilot a chance to fight his own fight. They were looked upon as the best thing up to that time, but the Vickers with the belt-fed ammunition supplanted them ultimately. The little thirteen meter Nieuports were great ships. I loved them, and to this day, if I could get one and be sure it was in good condition, I'd fly it for all the world to see. The Nieuport was not a plane for amateur pilots, but with a 110 horsepower le Rhone motor, it was as sweet a flying ship as anything in the air.

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With the arrival of the new Nieuports, I made my second Special Mission—the one that nearly finished me off. We left the field as usual in the very early morning, flying a Morane. I didn't like the looks of the spy they had given me; he had shifty eyes. I distrusted him. But we flew away and landed without mishap on the grass-grown field near Rocroi. He had the usual box of pigeons, and on landing, he hopped out and scurried off into the woods. That part of it was according to Hoyle. But the return! They nearly knocked me off. The only thing that saved my life was the poor shooting of those German gunners.

It was another early morning flight in a Morane-Saunier. We had, as usual, received a message by carrier pigeon to pick up the spy, and as far as one could tell, everything was going off exactly right. Just as I was about to land, I took a tour of the field down very low, instead of slipping in with a cut switch and taking a chance of starting the motor again at the last moment. That tour of the field was what saved me, because it warmed up my motor and also took me to a slightly different

position on the field. If I had landed in the spot I had used on my three previous attempts, it would have been fatal.

I have always believed that that spy was a *Counter-Espion* working for the Germans. Captain Bouche was later advised by headquarters that our spy had been captured and had given out the details of my return trip, perhaps in the hope that he would not be executed. All this matters very little to me. I can only remember what happened on the landing field at Rocroi. As I said before, I took a tour of the field and then came down for my landing. Suddenly from the woods ahead of me, there was a burst of machine gun fire. After that, they shot at me with everything in the German Army. If they had only waited until my machine rolled to a stop, I would have been easy meat for them. But as usual, the Germans, from the Generals and the Chiefs of Staff down to the lowest private, never know when they're winning. So they opened up on me a little bit too soon. In fact, I hadn't touched the ground yet.

All I did was to give my motor the gun and zoom up as far out of the way as possible. My wings looked like a sieve. I had a small wound in the thigh. And, mind you, all this happened in less than fifteen seconds, because as soon as I zoomed, they had to change the angle of their machine gun fire to almost 180 degrees. This meant that they would have to turn around and wait until I had passed over them, and then fire at me from the rear.

Of course, I got away, but there was some cold perspiration on my brow, and a good many mouthfuls of profanity on my lips. If I ever see that spy again and have a shootin' iron handy, it's goin' to be Kingdom Come. I'll perforate that baby's hide and make him like it. His

figure'll look much like my wings did when I landed back at la Cheppe.

The Captain said, "Well, where's the spy?"

I shook my head. The Captain looked back in the rear cockpit. I pointed to the perforated wings. The Captain understood. He was a war-wise fellow, that Captain of ours, and we liked him a lot for it too.

That was my last Special Mission.

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Three days later, I witnessed what I consider to be one of the most extraordinary aviation accidents of the war, and as I was the only one there beside the German (who is now dead), you-all will have to take my word for it.

I had been flying inland, say about ten to twelve kilometers inside the German lines between Rheims and Machault. A German plane passed me. It was a new type. They were very fast and excellent climbers. The motor on my little thirteen-meter Nieuport was not working too well that afternoon and for that reason, I could never quite get up to my enemy's altitude. He was always above me, and apparently unwilling to stop and fight it out. I followed him all over the heavens at the height of about 4,500 meters, which is somewhere near 14,000 feet. I would pull my nose up occasionally and take a few random shots at the Boche, but he didn't mind. He just kept on leading me around, using up my gasoline and wearing out my patience.

Finally, I discovered that we were heading off in the direction of Epernay. I also realized that my enemy was preparing to do something in the way of attack, and it was a very strange attack too. He used hand grenades. It was the first and only time I ever encountered such an attack in the air. He would pull the fuse, swing the

grenade down at me, and of course, miss by a wide margin.

The situation began to be funny and continued to be funny until a most unusual thing happened—the thing that to me was one of the most extraordinary accidents I'd ever seen.

After the German had thrown four or five grenades, he reduced his altitude a bit. I thought that at last we would fight, but I was mistaken. I saw that he was pulling the fuse on another grenade. He was still high enough above me to prevent me attacking him, so I could only stand around and wait for developments.

He drew back his arm and let the grenade fly. I have never been able to tell whether his coat got caught in some part of the plane or in his effort to throw harder than before, he reached up too high and thereby struck the grenade against the top wing. At least, I do know that the grenade fell back into his own cockpit. Now remember, the fuse had been pulled on that grenade and in five or six seconds it would explode, no matter where it was.

The German pilot immediately let go of his controls. His ship lost altitude rapidly. I followed, and in that moment, I could have shot him to pieces if I had wanted to. But the German pilot was not worrying about me; he was scrambling around on the floor of his cockpit looking for the infernal machine he had intended for my special benefit. It seemed to last hours—tense situations like that always do.

Suddenly I realized that the German had taken hold of his controls again. He righted his ship in one movement. We were then flying along beside each other, so closely that I could see everything he was doing. He had, by this time, given up the idea of recovering the lost grenade and I had given up the idea of shooting him full of holes until something happened one way or the other.

All this took less than five seconds, because things happen in a hurry in the air.

At what seemed to be the last possible moment, he raised up in his cockpit and bringing his right arm up to his helmeted head, he saluted me in the best approved German manner. And almost the same instant there was an explosion.

The back portion of the fuselage of the German plane was disconnected from the fore part. For a very brief space of time, everything stood still, and then the German and the fore part of the plane tipped over and dived 14,000 feet, motor full open, at the ground.

The remains landed with a bang not far from the village of Prunay, on the grassy banks of the Marne Aisne Canal. The tail surfaces and the rear sections of the fuselage floated off and were lost in the blue depths beneath me.

I didn't put in for a confirmation. The anti-aircraft batteries no doubt claimed the poor fellow, although they didn't shoot a single shot. He was a game devil, that German, and I'm sorry he didn't give up the grenade idea and fight it out with me. I might have let him go; or who knows, he might have bumped me off. Wouldn't have mattered much—one pilot more or less.

It was a great lesson to me—never monkey with a buzz-saw in the air. And a hand grenade is the nearest thing to a buzz-saw I can think of.

CHAPTER XII

My buddy, Jimmy Bach, took his last airplane ride in this man's war on the 15th of September, 1915. It was his first and last Special Mission. There were two planes engaged in the mission, each plane carrying a pilot and one spy. Jimmy piloted one plane and Sergeant Mangot piloted the other.

They took off, as usual, at the very first break of daylight, and, flying as high as they could, they headed for the field near Rocroi. Each spy had his quota of carrier pigeons. Everything went beautifully until the landings were made.

When the story of my last Special Mission got around in the Escadrille, most of the men began to look upon such a detail as a mild kind of suicide. The Boche had nearly finished me off and everyone expected that another attempt to plant spies in the neighborhood of Rocroi would be fatal. But Jimmy's orders said Rocroi and Rocroi it was.

Considering the hazards of the trip, he and Sergeant Mangot had arranged to do the thing very methodically. Mangot was to land first. While he was depositing his spy, Jimmy Bach would drop down and do the same. Mangot would take off as soon as possible and in that way, only one ship would be apparent at a time, while the other might be on the lookout for trouble, planted machine gunners, enemy planes, lookouts, etc.

According to the plan, Mangot made his landing. The spy got away. But as he taxied around to take off, he turned his plane over and seemed to be unable to extricate

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himself from the wreck. Jimmy, seeing what had happened, landed as quickly as possible, unloaded his spy and hurried over to help the unlucky Sergeant.

Mangot's machine was completely smashed, but he was not hurt. Jimmy, cool-headed fellow that he was, lifted up the disabled plane and helped Sergeant Mangot get away. All this took time. At any moment a detachment of wily Germans might have rushed out of the nearby woods and raked the fields with rifle or machine gun fire. But luck seemed to be with the pilots of MS-38. The only sound in all that stretch of country was the purr of Jimmy Bach's motor. He had left it running so as to preclude the possibility of being caught with a dead stick.

As soon as Sergeant Mangot was free of his plane, he and Jimmy ran across the field. Mangot hopped into the observer's cockpit with Jimmy forward at the controls. Everything looked easy from there on. Jimmy opened up his motor and presently they were skimming along, tail up, almost leaving the ground, when suddenly their propeller struck a stump that had been hidden away in the tall grass.

Sometimes a propeller can take quite a blow before it flies apart. Jimmy held on as long as he could, hoping that this was one of the times when he would fly home with the tip knocked off his prop perhaps, but get home just the same. Once it seemed that the prop would hold. Then suddenly, it flew apart with a loud report. There was a wide circle of splinters. The plane rolled to a stop. There they were marooned inside the German lines. The spies had escaped. There was no real evidence on that score, but neither Jim nor Sergeant Mangot were anxious to go up before a German court-martial.

They tried all kinds of experiments to get back to the French lines, but were finally captured and taken to Laon,

where the German Field Headquarters was located. Laon is a hill city, dating back to the very earliest times. The cathedral and the principal buildings of the town can be seen for miles in all directions. It was an admirable place for a headquarters. The Germans occupied Laon all during the war, until in October, 1918, a detachment of American negro troops, operating with the French in that part of the line, made a very rapid advance and the Germans, packing up everything they could carry, left in a great rush.

In September, 1915, they had no idea of ever leaving the place. Rumor hath it that Laon was to be the extreme frontier of Mittel-Europa. But let's avoid that. It involves diplomacy—something no self-respecting soldier should ever discuss.

At Laon, things looked rather black for Jimmy Bach and Sergeant Mangot. At the first trial, no decision was reached. A well-known lawyer was sent out from Berlin to defend the American and French aviators. Jimmy Bach arranged that part of the procedure. It was mighty good luck that Jimmy could afford it too.

On the second trial, the accused were cleared of being spies, but were confined to the prison at Nuremberg for the remainder of the war. Poor old Jimmy was given the doubtful honor of being the first American pilot to be captured by the Germans, and was the one who ultimately spent the most time in the prison camp. It was just Jimmy's fate—that's all.

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You see in the French Flying Corps, and in the Lafayette Escadrille too, we believed that if some bozo wrote your name on a bullet, it would get you, no matter if it was a silver bullet, or a lead bullet, or a tin bullet,

or a hunk of an aerial bomb, or just a three-cornered brick bat. You might have heard it coming and even seen it and then ducked and have done all the things prescribed for saving one's life in such a crisis. But that bullet had your name on it and after it hit you, it would be

A little brown worm with a glassy stare,
Would nibble your eyeballs and part your hair.

One had to believe something like this to get through the war and not go absolutely nutty. I saw 'em go nutty. Why, the noise of the artillery barrages the French sent over in the September, 1915, Offensive in the Champagne, was enough to unbalance an elephant, to say nothing of the poor *poilus*. So the ones who remained sane and happy became fatalists; the others were glum and morose and ineffective and got killed just the same as we did, and quite as often.

The Champagne offensive, as I told you before, was rather an experimental affair. Like the British in the north, the French wanted to try out the new artillery tactics and also see how much the Boche would stand. They found that the old Germans would and could stand quite a lot. The official figures show that from September, 1915, to November, 1915, the French casualties in the Champagne offensive were more than four hundred thousand. It's hard for a civilian to believe, but it happened all right, and if any of you had been in Chalons and seen the lines of ambulances and the hospital trains creeping along, bumper to bumper and hub to hub, twenty-four hours a day, you'd understand—you'd know I was telling you the unadulterated truth.

The war in the air during those times kept us on the job morning, noon and night. On September 20th, with Leon, my mechanic, as an observer, in a two-seater Nieu-

port, I nearly had a victory. We were flying along at 2,600 meters over the village of Mour Mellon. Just ahead and below us sailed a German Aviatic. He was flying at ninety degrees to our line of direction, and what was best of all, heading towards us. I piqued a bit and gave Leon the best angle for a careful broadside shot. Our first burst missed. This was unfortunate, as we might have finished him off before he got going. After that, it was a matter of me preventing him from getting back farther into his own lines before I could pump some lead into his fuselage.

He combated back and forth trying to find an opening and shooting at me all the while. His unwillingness to come up close and settle matters was what prevented a victory going one way or the other. I held the altitude on him and Leon fired until the gun got hot. At about a hundred meters, we got a burst into the lower part of the fuselage, just behind the pilot's seat. That seemed to disorganize the controls in some way. From then on, the German plane was partially unmanageable. The pilot was, however, very clever and although we got several very good bursts into the middle of the ship, neither the pilot nor the observer were touched apparently.

When we were about two hundred meters over the ground, I dived, hoping we could give him the *coup de grâce.* Leon fired a long careful burst, but nothing happened. Either our sights were off or that plane was carrying armour plate. We followed him down as near the ground as we could and he finally crashed in a rough field recently pitted with shell holes.

I could see that the ship was pretty much of a wreck, but there was no chance of a confirmation on it, as we had only forced the enemy down; he was not altogether out of control. I razzed Leon a bit on his poor shooting, and

he suggested that luck went in streaks. We barely had enough gas to get home.

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Back at the field they were worrying about us, we had been out so long, and one of the pilots came back with the report that he had seen a Nieuport two-seater go down in flames. His report was quite true. It was a Nieuport from another squadron. At sundown, that day, we had the first official news of Jimmy Bach's capture and the possibility that he would be tried as a spy. Several of us wanted to go over and bomb Laon—just like a bunch of crazy fool aviators! Trying to bomb the German Headquarters out of trying a man on the charge of being a spy. But Jim would have been pleased to know that our hearts were in the right place, which I may as well say, they were.

CHAPTER XIII

We knew him as "Nimmie" Prince, but to the outside world, he was Norman Prince. And he was the person who conceived the idea of the Lafayette Escadrille. In November, 1915, Nimmie was at Marblehead, Mass., where he attended the Burgess Flying School and came into his first knowledge of flying. He and Frazier Curtiss talked over the matter of an American flying outfit in the Allied Armies. Curtiss was in favor of joining such a group, but wanted to make one more try at signing up with the British Flying Corps; if this failed, he would join forces with Prince.

On January 20, 1915, Norman Prince sailed for France, where he went to work at once on his Escadrille idea. The first actual plans were discussed on July 8, 1915, at a luncheon in the home of Senator Menier in Paris, where General Hirchauer agreed to form what was then referred to as the "Escadrille Americaine." It would be an outfit operating under French officers, manned by American pilots flying French equipment.

Dr. Edmund Gros arranged the details of the luncheon. Doctor Gros ultimately became the father to the American Escadrille and his name is inseparably connected with its glorious accomplishments.

You see, to begin with, there were only three of us Americans in the French Flying Corps—Bill Thaw, Jimmy Bach and myself. As 1915 wore on and the war really got under way, four others joined the ranks of the American pilots. On the 9th of March, Nimmie Prince, Frazier Curtiss and Elliot Cowdin enlisted and were sent to Pau in the county of Basse Pyrénées for flying training. The

other two Americans were Raoul Lufbery, who had been attached to a Voisin Bombardment Squadron, and Didier Masson, originally a Frenchman, naturalized an American and an experienced war pilot, having flown in the Mexican troubles for Carranza.

So that made seven of us heading toward the ultimate Escadrille Americaine. (The name Lafayette Escadrille was finally chosen because of the fact that the Germans back in the States made a row over using the name "Americaine.") Jimmy Bach is often connected with the Lafayette Escadrille. This is a mistake. Jimmy was in a German Prison Camp before the Lafayette Escadrille was ever organized. To be really truthful, and to use technical terms, Jim was the "Herr Director of the Amerikanisher Kriegsgefangen Club" at Nuremberg, and didn't think it much of an honor either.

Another idea I should like to explode is the one about Lafayette's ghost appearing before Nimmie Prince in a dream and outlining the plan of the Escadrille. That is pure bunk, but you-all would be surprised to what extent it is believed. Another misstatement is the one about how the French Government mistreated us. Never were men given more consideration by any government than we were by the French. There are only a few of us left to make these statements. In fact, of the original line-up, only two remain, so it's up to us to raise our voices and declare the truth.

Norman Prince had the idea. William K. Vanderbilt supplied the financial backing to get the thing under way and also made up the prize money and helped with the monthly mess popote. Dr. Edmund Gros and Laurence Slade, with the help of M. de Sillac and Commandant Féquant, untangled the French Army red tape. We signed our names and did the fighting.

Now you-all have the concise facts. Of course, there was a long list of committee members which I shall give later, and a lot of details as to dates and places, but the few statements above will do for the present. The Lafayette Escadrille, all reports to the contrary, didn't get under way until April, 1916. Nimmie Prince had been working on the idea all the while. That was because of the red tape and the desire on the part of the American diplomats to keep from involving the United States in what seemed to them to be a breach of neutrality.

And while this was happening, Bill Thaw was down in the east end of the line with a bombing outfit, Caudron 46; Jimmy Bach and I were with MS-38 and finally N-38 (after we had been equipped with Nieuports); Prince and Cowdin were with a Voisin outfit, V-103; and Lufbery was with another Voisin Bombardment Escadrille numbered 102. I'm giving you all these careful details so that the progress of the various pilots may be studied as their flying and fighting technique evolved, because evolution it surely was. This yarn about a pilot springing from the flying school, fully armed like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter, is another of the generally accepted pipe dreams; pilots, like everyone else, must develop.

It might surprise the reader to know that at one time the French instructors and monitors almost gave up the idea of making a combat pilot out of Raoul Lufbery, that is, a *pilot de chasse*—the men who fly the single-seater fighting machines, the very tiny and very fast planes. Lufbery's hand was heavy at first; they said he was a good bomber, but no good for *chasse*. He fooled them though, for by sticking to his training long enough, he developed into one of the greatest aces of the war—a man whose attack was like lightning; whose marksmanship was uncanny, and whose nerve was never shaken.

Most of the time he was revenging the death of Marc Poupre, with whom he had been associated in exhibition flying for quite a few years before the outbreak of the war in 1914. Lufbery was Marc Poupre's mechanic. When Poupre was killed in December, 1914, Lufbery's one idea was revenge, and as you-all know so well, Lufbery's eighteen confirmed victories and his countless unconfirmed ones amounted to a considerable revenge.

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The thing that began to bother me about this time was the possibility of Jimmy Bach's execution as a spy. For, on October the 20th, the news got around that one trial had been concluded and no decision had been reached.

On the 25th of October I was sent up to Paris for a new plane. They advised me not to try flying back that day, but I thought I was rather a good pilot and in the face of a storm-warning, I took off. It was very nearly my last go-'round, as the Kentucky negroes say.

I had very little trouble making progress; as a matter of fact, that was the one thing I did best. My own speed was around a hundred miles an hour and the wind on my tail was making perhaps thirty to fifty miles more in the direction of my flight. Then there were clouds—for long spaces of time I couldn't see the ground. From le Bourget to our field at la Cheppe, it was exactly 150 kilometers. It was just about an hour's flight in fair flying air, but with a thirty mile tail wind, figure it out for yourself. As the storm abated a bit, I flew down near the ground in an attempt to locate myself. After a bit I noticed a marching column. In the gathering darkness I couldn't recognize them at first. Finally I came quite close and saw to my disappointment, that they were German artillerymen.

I was very definitely off my line of flight and far back in German territory too, because German artillerymen didn't march along the roads up near the front with such little concern. By examining the ground more closely I discovered several gun emplacements, and taking the direction of the gun barrels as the direction of the French front, I flew away, hoping to land in home territory before my gas ran out.

The fact that the wind was shifting by this time comforted me a great deal. If only my gas would hold out. Beneath me I saw collections of villages. But through the fog and low clouds all the villages looked alike. Finally I passed over a place that I took to be either Rheims or Verdun. Five minutes later my motor spluttered its last gasp and I landed in a grassy little pasture not far from a peasant's cottage. If I was inside the German lines, it would be "all night long for me"; I might burn my ship but I'd be taken prisoner and become assistant to Jimmy Bach up at Laon or heaven knows where.

The peasant who lived near-by was a kindly old codger. He was greatly relieved when I spoke to him in French and I was quite as much relieved when he told me that the German lines were ten kilometers away. I had landed between the villages of Nixeville and Souhesmes la Grande. (Both places have since become familiar to many members of the A.E.F., through their proximity to the Argonne Forest.) My guess about the city was not far wrong. I had just flown over Verdun and had landed inside the French lines about forty-five kilometers from la Cheppe. The old peasant fed me well and listened with open-eyed wonder to my yarns about the Flying Corps. The fact that I was an American thrilled my French host most of all. He kept saying:

"But it is so far away—*la bas, la bas.* And you fight

for the love of fighting, so far from your natural habitat —*la bas, la bas.*"

He had lost a son. They showed me a picture of the young fellow. He was an infantryman. They hadn't heard of him since the battle of Charleroi. That was very early in the war, away back before the battle of the Marne. The old Frenchman also explained that the first and farthest advance in that neighborhood made by the Germans in 1914 had been to the very field where my little Nieuport was standing.

Next morning I got some gasoline and flew back to my home field at la Cheppe. They had almost given me up, as the report of my departure from le Bourget had reached the commanding officer right in the middle of the storm. Captain Bouche was very pleased to see me again. I couldn't tell really though whether his pleasure was on my account or on account of the brand new Nieuport, which I hadn't cracked up.

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On the 30th of October, Jimmy Bach was tried for the second time and dismissed; that is, he was not executed as a spy. But he was, as I told you-all before, held as a prisoner until the end of the war in 1918.

CHAPTER XIV

How it did rain the first few days in November and even when the rain stopped the clouds were low and flying was a washout. It was during that rainy period that Captain Bouche went out with me several times in reconnaissance patrols. We used a two-place Nieuport, with a Lewis machine gun aft in the observer's cockpit.

Our second "sortie" on November 5th very nearly resulted in a tragedy. We were being shot at from the ground by the German anti-aircraft batteries. Our altitude was about 3,000 meters. This was exceptional for that season of the year, but it just so happened that the air had cleared up a bit and we went up to the inside edge of the clouds so as to get as long a range of vision back into the German lines as possible.

My usual zig-zagging seemed to be effective against the anti-aircraft batteries, when all of a sudden we felt a shock and I noticed that my controls were jammed. The rudder was locked in the neutral position and the elevators were locked in a slight climb. Fortunately the ailerons were free. (The ailerons are the two free pieces of wing on each side of the top training edge. They are used to maintain lateral flying balance, while the elevators are used to maintain a fore and aft balance.)

At the time we were hit, we were a short distance inside the German lines. Under normal conditions, even without the motor, we might have glided clear of the trenches by six kilometers. But this was not a matter of gliding. To glide, one must push forward on the controls, raise the tail, lower the nose, inclining the plane

toward the ground. With the elevators stuck in a climbing position it was impossible to lower the nose of the plane.

I took the situation into account as calmly as possible. If I continued as I was, sooner or later we would register a direct hit from one of the German anti-aircraft batteries because, crippled as we were, zig-zagging was impossible. Finally we would run out of gasoline and then with the nose still up, we would fall off into a *vrille* (tail spin) and with the controls jammed, there would be no coming out of it. We would be finished.

There was one thing left to do and that was to use the motor. So I tilted the plane over in the direction of the French side and throttled down the motor until we began to lose altitude. Our slip was a slow one. It would be impossible to come out of a fast slip because that was done by putting on the rudder nearest to the direction of the slip.

When we finally got safely over the French side of the lines, I began to look for a landing field. I later discovered that this was an unnecessary worry; we landed where the plane dropped us. There was no time for selection. At 500 meters we were over a forest. I had landed in forests before and my memory of such occurrences was rather unhappy. So I straightened out and nursed the little Nieuport to a less wooded section of country-side, where we finally did one of the funniest galloping-goose landings you have ever seen. As I think of it now, it must have been very much like the American cadets landing their Caudrons at Tours in 1918. (Tours was the second American Aviation Instruction Centre.)

After that Captain Bouche was surely sold on me as a pilot and I might as well confess that I was more or less sold on myself, until something that happened a few

weeks later took all the old conceit out of me and left me a bit flat and deflated.

Once on the ground we made an examination of the plane. There was a hunk of a German 77 shell case almost as big as the palm of one's hand jammed right in between the elevators and the rudder. If that hunk of German iron had had a little more kick behind it, the entire tail surfaces would have been blown off and this story would never have been told. Nor would I have lived to pile up victories in aerial combat.

That's what one calls the fortunes of war, and those fortunes oftentimes depend upon the speed and kick behind certain hunks of grey iron shell cases.

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On the 16th, 17th and 18th of December, 1915, I had a combat with a German Albatross. On each of the three days noted, I met the same machine and unsuccessfully tried to finish it off. The way I knew it was the same machine was by certain markings on the fuselage.

The first time, it was an unimportant battle. I shot two bursts at him and he shot two bursts at me. Then he tipped over on his left wing and side-slipped out of the way and I had to let him go by, as I had a very definite reconnaissance mission to perform.

The second time we combated around quite a long while until I had a gun jam and that time it was I who pulled out of the fight. But the third time, there was no quarter given nor taken. I pumped lead into that Albatross until it seemed that the struts would drop out of their fittings, and still it went on as if nothing had happened. It is my firm conviction that either my guns were off or that Albatross was carrying armor plate.

This last scrap was pulled off near Machault. Through

maneuvering, I lost a lot of altitude and finally with my ammunition practically exhausted and my machine full of bullet holes, I found that I was not many meters above the ground just north of the tiny village of St. Etienne-à-Arnes. It took all the flying technique I had to get home, but I did ultimately make it.

There were eighteen bullet holes in the fuselage of my machine, and they were all bunched up dangerously near my cockpit. To this day I can't tell how that German managed to miss me so often. My nerves weren't exactly shot, but Captain Bouche looked me over and said that I needed a rest.

My orders were dated January 1, 1916, but they let me go a week ahead of time so that I might spend Christmas time in Paris with Mr. Laurence Slade of the Equitable Bank and Trust Company.

It was at that Christmas party and during the next few days in Paris that I had the first authentic news of the American Escadrille. Bill Thaw was all in favor of it, and as soon as I got the story of what it was supposed to be, I was in favor of it too.

When I left N-38 at la Cheppe, I was really severing my connection with the French Flying Corps until in September, 1916, when I left the Lafayette and went back with the French in what was known as Escadrille de Combat N-103, located at Cachy in the Somme sector. So you see I served with the Lafayette Escadrille from the first day of its organization at Luxeuil-les-Bains in April, 1916, until the fall of the same year when I entered the N-103 outfit. Captain d'Harcourt, under whom I had served down at Chalons in 1915 was the commanding officer of N-103. He had been Lieutenant d'Harcourt then and second in command of N-38.

PART III

CHAPTER XV

Whenever your commanding officer says he's going to give you a rest, there's always a nigger somewhere stowed away in the woodpile; particularly, if there is a war going on. Now, in peace time, soldiers get away with a considerable bit of "gold bricking," but in war time, soldier men work or go to the jail house, and as far as I'm concerned, I prefer working.

When they sent me to the French Aviation Training School at Avord, I was a little suspicious, but not enough. I flew more hours per day at Avord than I did per week at the front! And the old "crates" we flew at that training school would give any self-respecting pilot the willies. Then they were always trying out new ships, and the new ships were constantly hitting the ground, bouncing off perfectly good pilots. It took me about a week to find out that the front was the place for me.

My job at Avord was to give the aspiring aviators their first hops in two-place Nieuports. I had been accustomed to flying thirteen-meter Nieuports at the front, and when they presented me with a twenty-three-meter Nieuport and a green student pilot, I wasn't overly happy. In the first place, the twenty-three-meter Nieuports were heavy on the controls, slow, loggy, and by no means the cocky things I'd been accustomed to up Chalons way. Then the student pilots had their wind up most of the time. And I missed my friends and furthermore I didn't like the living conditions. But I was "taking a rest," if you please—one of those nice army rests you read about in books.

Among the interesting people I encountered at Avord

was a charming lad named Charley Nungesser. He had an athletic body; had been a boxer of some reputation and was now going into the Air Service. In 1927, when Nungesser and Coli disappeared on their North Atlantic hop, I oftentimes thought back to those early days at Avord when I first knew that spunky lad. Charley Nungesser was pretty badly cracked up in an aviation accident during the war, but it didn't bother him a bit, or rather, it did bother him, but didn't stop him from flying and fighting. He was a brave boy.

Another pilot I grew to know very well at Avord was Victor Chapman. I gave him his first Nieuport hop too. But Victor got into a jam one day with more odds against him than he could manage. That was on June 21, 1916. When he fell inside the German lines, we lost one of the best and bravest men who ever took an airplane off the ground.

I developed a *marraine* (god-mother) at Avord. I would, you know. In normal times she was a very well known modiste in Paris, but the war had done things with her business. She had originally lived in Avord, so it worked out that she came home and assumed the task of cooking the kind of delicious meals French women can cook, and cheering me up at the same time. When she told me that her name was Suzanne, I had a shock. I was reminded of Suzette, the dear little washwoman at Chalons—the one who had gone West during the bombing raid. And strange to say, these two women resembled one another.

Suzanne second was the pick of the two. She was a better educated woman, very pretty, and an excellent cook. In war times, when men miss so many meals, a little good cooking makes a whale of a hit. I tell you it does! Mimi,

up at Chalons, is an example of what food will do. Of course, she didn't restrict herself to feeding the inner man—she also clothed the outer man.

One of the principal drawbacks to any happiness Suzanne and I might have had or perhaps did enjoy was her insane desire for cleanliness. Soldiers wear clean clothes whenever they can get them, but stiff white shirt fronts are not the rule. I shall always remember how clever Suzanne was at stealing away my half-soiled linen. Just about the time I would become accustomed to a shirt or other such garment, when I had gotten it properly fitted to my body, as one would say, along came Suzie in the stillness of the night and next day I had to wear clean clothes. Suzanne was a charming person though, and because of her, Avord was a lot less boring than it would otherwise have been.

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In the early days of flying training, we had taken plenty of time for things and used the self-instruction method. Our casualties in training were small. As the war went on, yes, by Jove, even as early as 1916 while I was at Avord, I began to notice the effect of hurrying. The casualties increased. Every day there were fatal crashes. One didn't have to go to the front to be bounced off in the Air Service.

Another thing that tended to make Avord an unhappy place was the testing of new ships—the early Spads and the experimental Ponnier Pursuit ships. I wonder if you know that the first Spads were powered with an 80 horsepower Rhone engine and had a little wicker nacelle out in front of the actual body of the machine where the observer sat and did his fighting. The pilot sat back of the top wing, the ship being a biplane.

The front nacelle was attached to the top wing and to the landing carriage. The first one they tried turned over taking off and mashed the observer as flat as a flapjack. Everybody on the field tried to argue them out of trying the second one, but nothing would do but a test flight. So the second one was hauled out and two Frenchmen hopped in. It was their last hop. The pilot was a friend of mine, and I regretted his death a great deal. His name was Lieutenant Stromeyer. The machine took off all right but when Stromeyer tried to pull it out of a gradual glide, the front nacelle came off, the wings buckled up and that was the end of the first model Spad. That design was washed out, and a new one was developed. We finally pinned our faith to the Spad. I had many victories in the model XII with the 180 and 220 horsepower Hispano-Suiza motors, but the early types were duds.

Then came the little Ponnier airplane with an 80 horsepower le Rhone engine. The story of that flight can be told very briefly. The little plane went up about 200 meters, did a short turn of the field, tipped over on its nose and took a dive at the ground. There wasn't enough left of the remains to make a good bonfire. These are the kind of things that happened for a good many years before the principles of aeronautical engineering were discovered and the present day perfection in airplane design was developed.

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Every few days during this time I received letters from Mr. Laurence Slade or Bill Thaw or Norman Prince or the Committee Headquarters about the Lafayette Escadrille. It was beginning to be a serious matter, and as I was becoming more fed up on Avord every day, it pleased me very much to know that I might soon be ordered away

to the front with this new gang of American pilots.

Suzanne, my marraine, did her best, and I don't want to be unappreciative of her efforts, but Avord was a dull place, chicken dinners and clean linen notwithstanding.

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At last my orders came. I told Suzanne good-bye. There were a few tears. She packed my bag and I never saw her again. The actual date of the official roster of the Lafayette Escadrille was March 14, 1916, and these are the names it contained:

Norman Prince, Marblehead, Mass., transferred from French Flying Corps.
William Thaw, Pittsburgh, Penna., formerly of the Foreign Legion.
Bert Hall, Bowling Green, Kentucky, formerly of the Foreign Legion.
Elliot Cowdin, New York City, transferred from French Flying Corps.
Kiffen Rockwell, Asheville, North Carolina, transferred from French Flying Corps.
James McConnell, Carthage, North Carolina, transferred from French Flying Corps.
Victor Chapman, New York City, transferred from French Flying Corps.

I received my orders on the 16th of April. The meeting place was Luxeuil-les-Bains, in the county of Haute Soane. Some of the pilots were sent to Luxeuil by way of the French Aviation Instruction and Supply Center at le Plessis Belleville, but I went from Avord to Paris and from there direct to Luxeuil.

On the night of the 17th of April, 1916, Sergeant Norman Prince gave a swell dinner at Ciro's in Paris. I

have often regretted that I didn't arrive in time for that celebration. There was something historical about it. The guests were:

Corporal Victor Chapman.
Corporal Kiffen Rockwell.
Lieutenant Bill Thaw.
Corporal James McConnell.
Corporal Clyde Balsley.
Corporal Chouteau Johnson.
Corporal Laurence Rumsey.
Michael, Norman Prince's mechanic.
Paul Rockwell, brother of Kiffen.

According to the rumor, everybody drank toasts and then the official roster of the Escadrille was read off. It included seven names, as I told you before. Captain Georges Thénault was the commanding officer and Lieutenant de Laage de Meux, second in command. The Committee up at Paris promised us a prize of 1,000 francs for every German plane we brought down and had confirmed officially. They also contributed 125 francs per month per man to our mess account and supplied us with a new uniform free every three months. This last relieved us of the possibility of having our outfits supplied us by admiring lady friends. And I may as well say right here that Luxeuil-les-Bains was a happy hunting ground for the lady-killers. Aviators were more or less unknown to the place before we arrived. We hadn't been there very long, however, before they knew quite a lot about the pilots in the Escadrille Lafayette, and I'm not boasting either.

Our equipment was all brand new. Every detail was complete. The planes were thirteen- and fifteen-meter

EARLY DAYS AT LUXEUIL-LES-BAINS

Left to right: Kiffen Rockwell, Captain Thénault, William Thaw (hiding behind the Captain), Norman Prince, Lieutenant de Laage, Elliot Cowdin, Bert Hall, Jim McConnell, and Victor Chapman.

Left to right: Norman Prince, two unidentified Frenchmen, Charles Nungesser, another unidentified Frenchman, Didier Masson. Taken near Bar-le-Duc.

Nieuports. These were set up at once. We wanted to get on with the war and the Local Bombardment Groups wanted to have our assistance on some pill-dropping escapades far inside the German lines.

The Lafayette Escadrille was technically known as N-124. Our field was about one mile northeast of Luxeuil. Part of the outfit was quartered at the Hôtel Lion d'Or. Some others commandeered a little chalet on the edge of town. My buddy and I lived in the upstairs rooms of a house owned by a retired French Colonel. We didn't stay long at the Colonel's place, however. He misunderstood our youthful spirits. He said we were too noisy. We *were* noisy, but then what could an aviator do in his spare time but raise a little hell now and then! The trouble was that the house belonged to the Colonel and property rights are very serious things in France. So we moved to the chalet with the other members of our gang.

The first introduction we had to the war in that part of the line was a visit to the headquarters of Captain Happe, the commanding officer of a very famous Farman Bombing Squadron. The old captain was packing war crosses (*croix de guerre*) in tiny boxes as we came into his office.

"I am sending these," he said, "to the families of the men who were killed off in my last raid. The raid was very successful but we lost some good pilots."

The boys looked at one another. "Lost some good pilots!" There were four tiny boxes containing war crosses. At that rate, it would take just two raids to finish off the entire Lafayette Escadrille. Looked like a shame that we would be cut off in our prime almost before we did anything that would repay the folks up at Paris for organizing us. But we tightened up

our belts and went out on the field for our first patrol.

It was old stuff for some of us, but the newcomers were considerably thrilled. The orders on that first "sortie" covered a patrol between Cernay and the Swiss frontier. We flew between 10,000 and 15,000 feet. The event of the trip was that Jimmy McConnell got lost. He found himself wandering around over Switzerland and finally recovered himself in time to get back before his gas ran out.

Next morning we received a billet-doux from the Swiss Government. They were irate because we had committed a breach of neutrality and flown over their country. Nothing happened in the way of battles on that first "sortie." It was more or less a joy ride to look over the country, the entire squadron participating.

. . . . . .

That night Kiffen Rockwell and I held a little conference of war. We had been in the Squadron long enough to find out that we didn't like all the members. Strange to say, we agreed on our dislikes. Thereupon, Kiffen and I decided to do each other a favor. If I was killed first, Kiffen would tell certain members of the outfit to go to hell and certain other things not usually reproduced on the printed page. If he was killed first, I would do the same thing for him. I am not a drinking man; in my lifetime, I suppose I haven't consumed a quart of liquor. But that night Kiffen Rockwell and I sealed our compact with a toast and a drink of cognac.

Here's to the ones who have gone before
And to those who follow on.

. . . . . .

For the benefit of those who would like to know the names of the men and women connected with the organiza-

tion of the Lafayette Escadrille, here are the lists of the committees:

First Committee:

M. de Sillac, President.
Dr. Edmund Gros (later Lieutenant-Colonel, U. S. Air Service), Vice-President.
Mr. Frederic Allen, Secretary.

By the 1st of December, 1915, the committee included:

M. de Sillac, President.
Doctor Gros, Vice-President.
Mr. Frederic Allen.
Mr. Bacon.
Mr. Laurence Slade.
Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt.
Colonel Mott.

Mr. Robert W. Bliss, Mr. Robert Chanler, with Jacques and Paul de Lesseps also served in various capacities, helping to speed things up and to unwind the French Army red tape.

Six weeks after the Lafayette Escadrille arrived at the front, the Paris directors realized the need of a more comprehensive organization. The following is the list of the final committee:

M. Jorousse de Sillac, President.
Mr. William K. Vanderbilt, Honorary President.
Dr. Edmund Gros, Vice-President and official physician.
Mr. Laurence Slade, Colonel Bentley Mott } Treasurers.

Mr. A. G. Evans, Asst. Treasurer.
Mrs. E. P. Ovington, Secretary.
Bonbright and Co., Bankers.
Lieut.-Commander Frederic Allen, in charge of affairs in the United States.

In giving you-all these names, I have no doubt overlooked quite a few good folk who did great service in forming the Lafayette and I can only beg their pardons for the omission, in advance. A soldier's records of a war are ordinarily not overburdened with civilian details. The soldier thinks and writes in terms of battles and if he is an aviator, he thinks in terms of planes, combats and confirmations, and the luck he and his friends have enjoyed; whether the mess is good or not, whether his *marraine* is pretty or just rich, how much longer he will last at the front, and just how he will go down when the fatal bullet hits its ultimate target. For the hangars smelled of gasoline and wing dope, and new wood, and burned castor oil; and the barracks reeked with the talk of flying. Civilian details were forgotten. We knew that side of it would be looked after—our job was flying and fighting.

CHAPTER XVI

The fact that there was no great concentration of German aircraft in the Luneville sector was much in our favor at that time. We had some green pilots who might have gone down the very first time they got into combat. A quiet sector is a good place to practice formation flying and get a new outfit broken to their jobs.

As time passed, I became better acquainted with my brother pilots. I discovered that Victor Chapman would not enter into any of our wild parties. Not that any of those early Luxeuil celebrations were particularly wild—we really didn't get going in that way until our second visit, which was in the fall of 1916, when the boys in the British Naval Air Force used to join with us and celebrate as only aviators can.

In the light of future developments, here's an interesting diary note:

May 12, 1916

Got back the morning of the 10th from a three-day trip to Paris. The official reason was to ferry back a new ship. Heard a lot of talk at le Bourget about a new Spad. Laurence Slade says the Americans will get into the war, hook, line and sinker before the year's out. Had dinner with several pilot friends. Among them was Charles Nungesser. He is supposed to be convoying bombers at Luneville, but he said he intended to join the Lafayette some time next month. He can't actually join us, but we'll be glad to have him go on our patrols as he is a hell of a fine lad and a damned good pilot. At a table near-by was Mata-Hari (she is said

to be a German spy and they watch her all the time). Nungesser told her that I was the illegitimate son of a millionaire New York banker and that back in the States I wore suits of clothes with dollar marks all over them. Thereupon, I paid the bill. Mata-Hari is a beautiful woman. She may be a spy, but as long as I have known her, she has never asked me a single question about the war. She is damned clever, but if she is really as dangerous a spy as they say, she'd better watch out—the French will get her. Saw Eugene Bertin. He's a tester at present. Says they are about to bring out some very smart new planes. But I'd rather be at the front—testing has never interested me since I saw those crackups down at Avord. Had letters from Missouri. Father thinks I'm the whole French Flying Corps all by myself.

Later

Jimmy McConnell had a round with his milliner last night. She's a sweet little person and surely takes good care of Jim. Puts out the finest dinners you ever saw and what Jim calls "swell attention," etc. (He's a Southerner and like all Southerners, has a lot of strange expressions.) Seems that Jim wanted to show off his milliner to Nimmie Prince and Kiffen Rockwell. Well, it was late by that time and the milliner's place was dark, but Jim beat a tattoo on the iron shutters and the entire neighborhood came to life. According to Nimmie and Kiffen, Jim was "binjed" up, so he wasn't altogether accountable for the treatment he passed out to the little girl. Jim told me later that he has tried out practically every way of handling women and has discovered that a little rough play was about the best system. Good old Jimmy McConnell.

On the 14th of May I encountered a Boche at about 12,000 feet. We shot at each other until his rear gun jammed. Then I stopped playing around and hopped on him for all I was worth. I had hardly shot two bursts when my gun jammed and there we were—two miles and a half from the ground and practically helpless. From that altitude I could glide back into my own lines as long as my wings held on. So I decided to try clipping the German's tail with my propeller or snag him in some way; at least, my intentions by him were bad.

I dived at his tail and he pulled out of the way. I dived again and this time he stood still, but every time I tried to lower my nose to the level of his tail surfaces, the slip stream from his propeller would hit my ship and I'd go twenty-five meters before I could get under control again. I made about ten trials and then gave it up as a bad job. You see, I couldn't be too rough with that kind of a procedure, as I might break up my ship at the same time. So we waved each other good-bye and as he went back to Germany, I went back to Luxeuil.

Diary note, May 17, 1916

Bill Thaw had a near victory today. He shot up a two-seater over the forest of Carspach, but according to the French observers, the German plane landed apparently under control.

Diary note, May 18, 1916

Today Kiffen Rockwell got the first German plane ever credited to the Lafayette Escadrille. It happened not far from the city of Thann. He afterwards told us that he first saw the German (it was an L.V.G.) about 700 meters below his altitude; that he dived and withheld his fire until he was about fifty meters away,

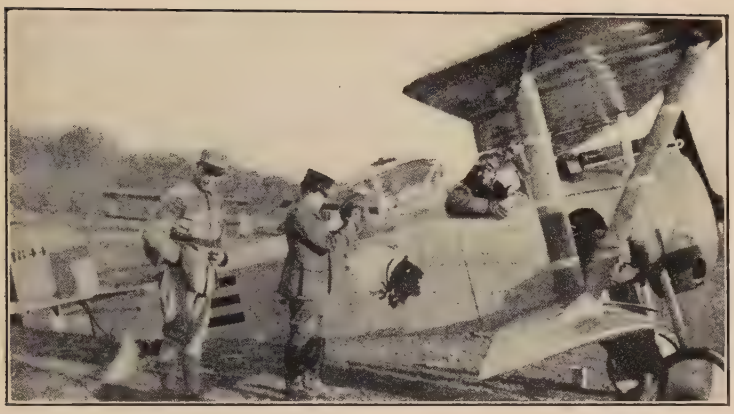
then he fired. He was so close that he could only get in a burst of four bullets, and by the time he had pulled off and recovered, the German had turned over and was going down in flames.

Think of it—a confirmed victory with only four bullets! And then consider a combat where a pilot exhausts an entire drum of ammunition with no results! What Kiffen Rockwell had was marksmanship and a cool steady control of his plane. The advance French observation posts had watched the battle and had seen the German go down afire, so Kiffen had his confirmation before he arrived at our field.

Before nightfall, everyone in Luxeuil knew the good news. Kiffen was a popular hero—the girls gave him bunches of flowers and the hotel-keepers sent him bottles of champagne. (The champagne came in very handy with the other members of the Escadrille who didn't care for floral tributes.) At last we were officially on the map. Kiffen had saved the face of the outfit and we didn't mind admitting it. But he was a modest fellow and bashful too. He said it was nothing, but we knew better. It was his first confirmed victory and that was a milestone in the life of a fighting pilot. As I told you-all before, Kiffen Rockwell and I were most awfully good friends. He told me privately that he was mighty glad to have a victory, but he hated all the ballyhooing and the publicity he was getting over it, when other men at the front were shooting down Germans every day and hardly being noticed in the orders of the day.

Diary note, May 19, 1916

Germans came over at 3.00 A.M. and bombed our hangars. One pill fell about fifty meters from Victor



RAOUL LUFBERY IN HIS NIEUPORT 15

It is equipped with a machine gun shooting through the propeller.

THE ORIGINAL LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE AND THE THREE DOGS

From left to right: Victor Chapman, Elliot Cowdin, Bert Hall, William Thaw, Captain Thénault, Lieutenant de Laage, Norman Prince, Kiffen Rockwell, James McConnell.

Chapman's plane, but there was no damage. Chapman, Rockwell and Thaw took off in an attempt to pick off the visiting Germans, but they were too high and too far ahead of us. Thaw came closest to getting results, but even he fired at too great a distance to expect a hit. Kiffen Rockwell's confirmation says that the German plane fell in the German trenches not far from the village of Uffhulz.

On the 20th day of May, 1916, we had orders to pack up and move to the Verdun sector. The real war was going on up that way. Our hangars would be located at Bar-le-Duc. We lived in a little villa about half way between the flying field and the city. There were many, many squadrons in that vicinity because the battle of Verdun was going on just then and the Germans were trying to gain the supremacy of the air.

In the Verdun offensive the aircraft side of the war was managed and directed from the big headquarters commanding the offensive. They allotted so much time every day to certain squadrons. All of our work in the Verdun sector was patrolling, scouting and combat. The convoying and protecting of bombers was taken care of by other squadrons.

The day we left Luxeuil, news came from the headquarters of the Lafayette Escadrille in Paris about the prizes they planned to give for decorations and citations. We were to receive 1,500 francs with the Legion of Honor, 1,000 francs with the Médaille Militaire; 500 francs with the Croix de Guerre and 200 francs with each citation; that would be a palm for the Croix de Guerre.

CHAPTER XVII

On the morning of the 21st of May, 1916, we hopped off from our field at Bar-le-Duc for our first "sortie" in the Verdun sector. It came near being my last "sortie" and all because I misunderstood the signals. We flew off in a "V" formation. Captain Thénault had given us absolute orders not to attack until he gave the signal. I was at the Captain's right and about fifty meters below him. We passed three German planes as we entered their lines, but the Captain kept right ahead. He was apparently looking for big game. When we were over the city of Etain I sighted a formation of six Boche planes and at the same moment, the Captain dived for the attack. Picking out a German plane for my own private little battle, I dived too, thinking my comrades were with us. But Captain Thénault had only come down a short distance. He then pulled up. I didn't notice this gesture until it was too late. He signaled me that the others were not following, but there was nothing for me to do but to take my medicine.

The sky seemed to be full of German planes. I got a good burst into the one I had originally picked out and he turned away with his motor limping badly. I didn't have time to see what happened to him after that as I was being engaged by five enemies at once. They peppered me and made me like it. I used up all my ammunition, and did all the stunts I could think of to keep from presenting a target to the broadsides they were driving at me. We twisted and turned and dived and slipped and acrobated around madly. Several times I was so close to my antagonists

that I could see their faces quite plainly. Finally I turned over on my back and went down in a spin, as if I had been hit. Two of them followed me. The fight started at 4,000 meters. When my altimeter registered 500 meters, I noticed that the Germans had given me up as a goner.

In an instant, I took advantage of this situation and leveling off my plane, I started off for home with every ounce of speed I had. My lead was very slight, but they had relaxed their vigilance just long enough. I almost hedge-hopped all the way back and when I arrived, Leon Barracq, my mechanic, was almost in tears. My plane was full of holes. It had just been decorated with dollar marks as an answer to the yarn Charley Nungesser had told Mata-Hari on my last leave to Paris. Leon had to work almost all night repairing my little Nieuport. Leon was an excellent mechanic.

Next morning, Raoul Lufbery put in his appearance. For the next two years Lufbery rode the skies like a fighting demon. He was finished off in May, 1918, with a score of eighteen confirmations and God only knows how many unconfirmed. He and I talked a bit that first morning and during the conversation he told me that he would never go down afire. If he was ever hit and his gas tanks were ignited, he would jump. He had seen pilots come down in flames, but cremation was not his idea of a pleasant death. And that's what happened to him too—he jumped, and they buried him—one of the greatest aces the Americans had.

We took "Luf" in with open arms. The boys loved him. But the moment he laid his eyes on "Gitchy-Goomie" (Gitchy-Goomie was a pet name I had concocted for a certain officer in the French Army), something happened. Lufbery and Gitchy were enemies from that sec-

ond on, and all because Luf would not be a boot-licker. He used to get "binjed" up and say, "Come on, Bertie, let's lick 'im." And I, knowing who " 'im" was, tried all the diplomacy I had to prevent an international situation. Not that I was opposed to a good fight or anything like that, but I did believe that there was something to be said in favor of picking one's opponents. And anyway, it was considered un-military to hit men with gold braid all over 'em. It was bad stuff for the troops.

Incidentally, I should tell you-all that I had been promoted. The promotion was dated May 1st. I was an Adjutant, if you please—Adjutant Bert Hall, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

. . . . . .

On the day of Lufbery's arrival (which according to my diary was May 22nd), I had my first luck in the Lafayette Escadrille. Leon had been working overtime restoring my plane from the previous day's grilling. He had also painted little extra dollar marks over the patches that in turn covered the bullet holes. Lufbery looked at my ship and asked me if it had some kind of skin disease —a pox, perhaps, chicken or small, or scarlet—no, that's a fever. I suppose it must have been just chicken or small. I told him my plane had the German measles. He thought I was rather a poor punster. And then I gave Leon the sign. He pulled the blocks away and I took the air.

Four of us took off together that day—Prince, Rockwell, Thaw and myself. As we passed over the little village of Esnes, I noticed to my surprise that my three partners had disappeared. I later discovered that they had engaged a formation of Germans at a lower altitude. Continuing in an eastward direction, I soon passed over

Malancourt. Now Malancourt is five kilometers from Montfaucon and seventeen kilometers from Verdun. Just as I was heading off to the north a bit to follow the lines in the direction of Varennes, I sighted a two-place German observation plane flying along a little bit below my altitude. We started the fight at about 15,000 feet; that's nearly five miles above the earth. I conserved my ammunition as much as possible and waited for a chance to get into his blind spot. The observer firing from the rear cockpit of that German plane was an excellent marksman, but I was doing some good shooting those days myself. And although we were losing altitude very rapidly, I was quite confident that as long as a patrol of German combat planes did not happen that way I'd get a burst into my enemy sooner or later—a burst that would finish things off right.

Once his tracer bullets cut through my plane not more than a foot behind my cockpit and another time I saw them skimming along the surface of my right wing cutting the fabric as they went. At an altitude of 300 meters, I had my chance. The wind had either caught him or for a moment his motor had lost power; at least, he presented a perfect target and I let him have it. My tracer bullets cut through the fuselage of the German plane from the engine right on back and then I dived under his tail and let him have two long bursts from beneath. That was the end of the fight.

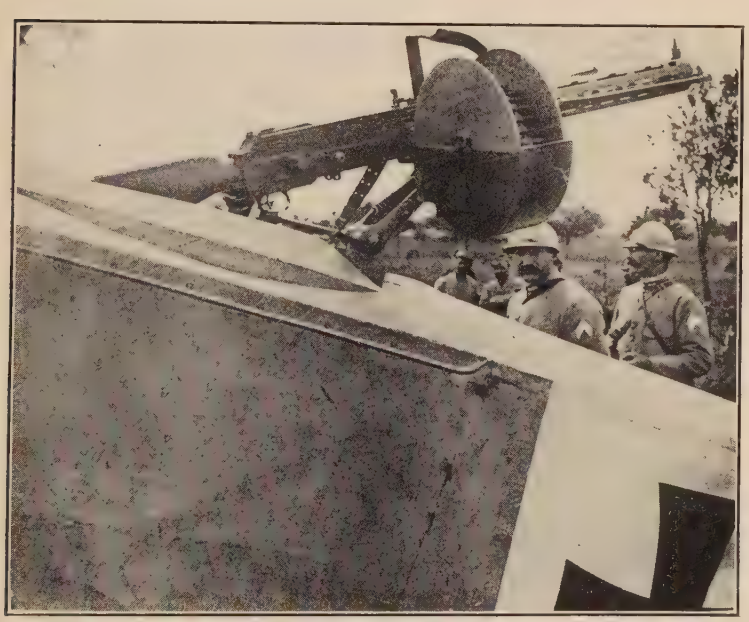
On the way down the plane came apart but did not go afire. Both pilot and observer were finished off. The body of the German ship and several parts of the wings fell into the French front line trenches. The story of my success was known at our headquarters long before I got there. The battle had been witnessed by thousands of French soldiers. Back at our hangars Leon was dancing

with joy. Lufbery was still on the field. He was adjusting the sights on his new plane. I reminded him of what he had said about the small pox. He said he thought it would be a good idea if I would inoculate his plane with some of the same kind of pox—it seemed to be a damned lucky disease.

With that we went back to our quarters where I mixed a water bucket full of cocktails. I was the bartender extraordinaire—the non-drinking bartender who mixed the best cocktail in all of France (according to the other members of the Lafayette Escadrille).

LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE PILOTS IN FLYING OUTFITS

Left to right: Chapman, Cowdin, Hall, de Laage, Prince, unidentified French mechanic, McConnell, Rockwell, Captain Thénault.



THIS IS THE KIND OF GERMAN MACHINE GUN THAT SHOT OUT SOME OF BERT HALL'S FRONT TEETH. IT IS AN AIR-COOLED BELT-FED GUN, MOUNTED IN THE REAR COCKPIT OF A TWO-PLACE GERMAN SHIP.

CHAPTER XVIII

Our barracks, or rather our villa at Bar-le-Duc, was, as I told you before, about half way between our flying field and the town. It was situated up on a little hill, not very high. There was a winding stone stairway running up to the door with flower beds all around. It was really a lovely spot. Too bad we had to lose some of our best men while we were living in that little fairyland. Our existence was almost like make-believe until the bombing raids commenced or the casualty lists came in. We had a phonograph in our villa and a piano too. The phonograph was supplied with the most terrible old records, but we played them just the same—some of them had cracked faces, but that didn't matter. Lufbery said the cracked ones had a bass drum accompaniment, as every time the needle hit a crack, it made a banging noise.

The piano was most troublesome. The Commanding Officer thought he was a musician. He really wasn't. His musical efforts were limited to pounding out a few bad tunes, and when I say pounding, I mean just that—pounding! He used to use the same bass notes for everything he played. But he was the C.O. and we had to put up with it. Now and again a Red Cross man or an ambulance driver would happen in and they could oftentimes play real music.

Among our visitors at this time was Trubee Davidson (now Assistant Secretary of War for Aviation). Trubee used to bring Bob Lovett with him and they always came in time for mess. It seems that they didn't like their own food, but had a hankering for the mess in the Lafayette Escadrille. Of course, they were constantly talking flying

and figuring out some way of joining up with our outfit.

Another visitor was Charley Nungesser. He got tired of convoying bombing machines and then he was cracked up considerably. The French Flying Corps wanted him to take a rest, so he just came and joined us—unofficially, of course, but he was there—for nearly two months all together, flying with us on patrols and shooting down Germans as if he were a member of the Lafayette Escadrille. I wish he were living today so he might add some of his own personal observations to this writing—some facts about his flying and his victories while he was with us.

On the morning of May the 24th, Bill Thaw had his first luck in the Verdun sector. He was flying along at a rather high altitude when he spied a formation of one Fokker and one Aviatic. He singled out the Fokker and after a short combat (which was really only a dive and a burst) the German plane turned upside down like a shark about to strike. Then it went afire and Lieut. Thaw had a victory. Up to that moment the scoreboard was two in our favor—one for me and one for Rockwell. Kiffen Rockwell had been out with Thaw that morning and had taken on the Aviatic, but had no luck. The Aviatic got away and flew back to the German lines.

Lunch that day was a gala affair. And as soon as the signal was given for our next patrol, we hopped off with great gusto, confident that we would have two victories on the 24th of May. Thaw, Rockwell, Chapman and myself went out together. Chapman became disconnected from the formation and finally got into a scrap with three Boche planes. He came out first best though, in spite of the fact that his plane was shot up and he had bullet holes in his clothing and a wound in the arm, for he got one enemy plane cold (unconfirmed) and another out of control.

After Chapman went off on his own account, Thaw and Rockwell and I stuck together until we ran onto a gang of Fokkers who surely meant business. There must have been about seven enemy planes in that patrol. I didn't count them but I'm sure there must have been at least that many. Thaw took the initiative and started the attack. Pretty soon, it was a dog fight of the worst kind.

I've never been able to tell whether Bill Thaw was trying to protect me when he got it in the shoulder and the elbow, and he would never tell himself. All I do know is that one of our planes came in between me and the two Boche planes and that by the time I had exhausted my ammunition I saw that someone was going down in an awful hurry. Meanwhile, Kiffen was having his troubles too. An explosive bullet had hit his windshield and sprayed his face with fragments of steel and glass. I got out the best way I could, but not until after I had taken a good many licks from the fast flying Boche machines. They were the new style Fokkers, and up to that time, they were pretty nearly the best in the air.

Bill Thaw almost fainted on the way down. The pain in his arm and shoulder was terrific. He managed to keep his plane in the air until he passed over No Man's Land and then in a moment of abandon he dropped it down just inside the French lines. His ship was a washout, but that didn't matter as long as Bill was saved. The French *poilus* gathered him up from the remains of the smashed Nieuport and carried him off to the nearest dressing station. From there he was sent to a base hospital and ultimately to Paris, where he had to remain quite a long while recovering from his bad break of luck.

Rockwell's experience was a rare one. When he landed to have the glass and shell fragments taken out of his face, he was cursing in three languages because of the mis-

fortune that had befallen him. Wounded, dammit! right when he might have scored a victory.

"Why," said the doctors who were picking out the little slivers of glass, "you should consider yourself the luckiest man in France. See how near this glass came to your eyes. And then do you know that the Boche whom you attacked came down in flames?"

Rockwell suggested that they refrain from making fun. But the Frenchmen were right. Kiffen's first burst had sent the German plane spinning down out of control and flaming in the bargain. The explosive shell on his windshield had deprived him of his eyesight for a few moments.

On the strength of our work so far, Thaw, Chapman, Rockwell and I were cited by the French Army in the orders of the day. Thaw was made an officer in the Legion of Honor; Chapman, Rockwell and I were given the Médaille Militaire and the Croix de Guerre with one palm leaf.

We knew from this that there would be a public presentation of decorations. Thaw would have to come back from Paris if he was well enough. I told Chapman and Rockwell to fly carefully for a few days; at least, until the presentation ceremony was over. But it didn't do any good—they were flying fools, those boys!

. . . . . .

Presently we began to take in some more recruits. According to my diary they came in this order:

Lufbery first. I have already mentioned him.

Johnson was next and then came Clyde Balsley. They had both been engaged in flying with the Defense of Paris Squadron. They were followed by Hill, Masson, Rumsey and Pavelka. I shan't consider the other recruits

at this time, as the names I have mentioned so far made up the Escadrille during the Verdun fighting.

. . . . . .

I have always thought that the bombing raid of June 2, 1916, was the result of a lot of ill-advised publicity we received after our first victories. The city of Bar-le-Duc was full of newspaper people and correspondents from all over the allied world. They naturally picked up every bit of gossip they heard and perhaps some of our good boys told more than they should have. At any rate, the Boche got the idea that a bombing raid was coming to Bar-le-Duc and to our hangars and our villa, in particular.

It happened in the afternoon. I was on the field alone preparing to go out on a private little patrol of my own. I happened to look up and there they were, flying in a tight formation—the German bombers. Victor Chapman and I took off at once. That is perhaps the only time that everyone in the Escadrille really wanted to get in the air. Why, you couldn't keep them on the ground, because the air was the only safe place in a bombing raid.

Chapman and I combated one of the bombers who was apparently unable to make the altitude of his fellows. We would have fallen on the main body of the Boche patrol, but they had the start on us and by the time we got up to their altitude they were off in the direction of Germany.

After the first two or three bursts from Chapman's guns, I saw that something had happened. At this juncture I came in for the *coup de grâce;* two short bursts from the rear and behind and that was the end of one bomber. The other members of our Escadrille harassed the retreating German planes, but not until they had done great damage. It was reported that seventy people were

killed and nearly two hundred wounded in that raid. Many of the injured were school children.

A few days later, Raoul Lufbery got a short leave of absence. He wanted to visit a girl friend of his who lived in the city of Chartres. We went about flying as usual and thought no more of Luf, except we were sorry not to have had his skillful hand at the stick of a Nieuport. One fine morning we had a telegram. It was from Luf. He said, "Please send someone to get me out of jail. I am in Chartres and the gendarmes will not listen to reason."

That night the Captain called Chartres on the long distance telephone and assured them that Raoul Lufbery was a member of the Lafayette Escadrille and that his release was very necessary to the success of the war. Next day he arrived. His story was a good one. It seems that he had got into a jam with the Railway Station gendarmes at Chartres and proceeded to lick the entire outfit. He did account for three or four before he was overpowered. Later at the jail, he proceeded to go into action again and nearly bumped off a few more of his gallant allies.

Lufbery was a fighter—at the front or on leave. He was always looking for a good scrap and having bummed his way around the world, he had found out how to use his fists to great advantage. Luf's story was—"I punched and they fell. Then they locked me up. But I didn't start the fight; they did. I only finished it."

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Toward the middle of June we were beginning to run short of men. Thaw was in the hospital at Paris; Rockwell hadn't recovered entirely from the explosion on his wind shield; Victor Chapman had two scalp wounds that more or less put him on the ground; Jimmy McConnell

had cracked himself up in a galloping-goose landing; so you see, we were short-handed on good men.

Clyde Balsley, a Southerner from El Paso, Texas, got into the picture about this time and he got his on his very first trip over the lines. Clyde and I grew to be most awfully good friends and I hated like hell to see him get hurt. But his name seemed to have been written on a German bullet and that was the end of things as far as he was concerned.

It happened on the morning of June the 18th, 1916. Clyde had made a short flight the day before, but had avoided combat. On the 18th, he went out with Captain Thénault, Nimmie Prince and Kiffen Rockwell. The four Lafayette pilots hopped on a patrol of Germans numbering about a dozen. They were the small type of Aviatics with places for two—a pilot to shoot forward and a gunner to shoot backward.

Nimmie Prince got a slight scalp wound in the mêlée that followed. But poor old Balsley got an explosive bullet in the stomach. He managed somehow to land his ship inside our lines, but his ship was a total write-off and he was desperately wounded. French infantrymen carried him to the dressing station and from there he was evacuated to the base hospital near-by. They operated on that poor boy at once and took out a handful of shell fragments. Clyde kept them—that is, the fragments, as souvenirs.

Every time we had a chance, we would fly over to the hospital and visit Clyde and try to cheer him up. But he was very low and suffering terribly all the time. On the mantel in his room were the shell fragments. As I remember, there were eighteen or twenty little hunks of metal the French doctors had taken from his stomach.

Naturally, he couldn't eat much of anything. We used

to get what fruit there was in the market at Bar-le-Duc, or a couple of bottles of champagne and take it over to the poor lad—anything to make him forget his pain for a little while.

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Chapman did most of the visiting at the hospital. On the 23rd of June he took off some time after noon with two bags of oranges which he intended to leave at the hospital after he concluded his patrol of the afternoon. Lufbery, Prince, and I were indicated for this patrol. Chapman just joined us for good luck. He had stowed the oranges away in the back of the plane.

After encountering two patrols of German planes and combating around unsuccessfully, we returned to our field thinking that Chapman had gone on to the hospital. But Chapman never arrived at the hospital. He got in on the tail end of our second mêlée and was shot down without our knowing it.

According to the French observation post near-by, he did not go afire on the way down, but headed, nose over, with the engine full open, and struck the ground at a terrific speed. There was Victor behind the German lines, smashed beyond recognition, and his two bags of oranges spread all over the ground. I have often wondered what the Germans thought when they found his body.

We couldn't, or rather wouldn't, believe it. Chapman had always been the last to get back from the patrols. He always came in with his machine all shot to hell—struts and wires and braces cut off. Why, once he landed with one side of his control rod cut away! That time, he had to direct his plane by holding onto the broken ends of the controls with both hands, and manipulate the fore and aft movements with the stick held between his knees.

His mechanic stood looking, looking, looking, off to the

east. "Mon patron. He will yet come back. They cannot shoot him down!"

But his "patron" never came back. When we tried to comfort the mechanic, we found that we had enough to do to comfort ourselves. This was our first real loss—the others had been wounded. Victor had been "done in"—he'd "gone West"! We looked at one another and we knew what was coming to us. Verdun was one of the greatest battles of all time. We had had many victories. We had to expect some losses.

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One of the most ghastly things about losing a partner in war times is rolling up his kit—packing what he left behind and sending it back to his folks. I ought to know—that job has fallen to me many times. I used to wonder how long I could continue packing up dead men's belongings. My turn would have to come some time, sooner or later. Jimmy McConnell and I used to talk over this thing of burial and last rites and what to tell the folks. Jim was not for much ceremony. Neither was I!

CHAPTER XIX

Diary note, June 24th—Saturday

Several of us went over to the hospital today to tell Balsley what had happened to Chapman. Fortunately Balsley is better, but, Christ, he was cut up! We had to tell him about the oranges, of course, and that was the climax! The nurses said that if we couldn't bring good news, to stay away. Balsley has all the pieces of the explosive bullet on exhibition.

I went through Bar-le-Duc on the way back, and there I met a war correspondent I had known as an ordinary newspaper reporter back in St. Louis. He said:

"Why, hell, I know you! I knew you when you were a snake-stomper back in the Ozark Mountains. Now they've made you famous! They've turned you from a snake-stomper into a cake-eater and soon you'll be a duke or a count or something. This war certainly changes the face of things."

He was finishing his lunch. I ordered some Bar-le-Duc jam and mixed it with some cream cheese and ate it at one swipe. He was disgusted.

"They've made a real frog out of you all right. How can you eat such a mixture!"

"Why," I said, "it's looked upon as one of the really great delicacies in France. It's a dessert. We end up our meals with it."

"Yes," he said, "and you eat snails too. Ugh." And he made a motion as if he was sea-sick.

Later in the same day

Laurence Rumsey has red hair and he's a friend of mine. He hails from Buffalo, New York. He was a famous polo player, and since the war began, he has been driving an ambulance. He took his training at Pau. The victrola is playing something that sounds like the "St. Louis Tickle." I had some luck earlier in the evening in a poker game. Hope I'm not bounced off before I get a chance to spend it. That'd be too damned bad. I've had Leon repaint my plane and cover up the dollar marks. He has put my name on the ship. It is spelled out B-E-R-T on one side and T-R-E-B on the other. Pilots can now tell who I am, no matter how they pass me. Not that it matters a damn who I am, but just the same, they can tell if they wish.

Diary note, June 29, 1916

Charley Nungesser is back. He says he is going to stay a long while this time. He has a skull and cross-bones, a coffin and four burning candles painted on the sides of his ship. I asked him if he had seen our friend Mata-Hari recently, but he said, "No, she's interested in big game—Prime Ministers and bloody generals. An ordinary aviator is too small a catch for Mata-Hari."

I told Charley that his story about me being the illegitimate son of a millionaire banker had cost me a small fortune and that I had finally had all the dollar marks on my plane painted over.

"Serves you right," he said. "You Americans look too prosperous."

Trubee Davison and that Lovett friend of his come to visit us occasionally. They're always hungry. They

must feed light in the ambulance outfits. That'd be no place for me.

Had some very bad news today. Eugene Bertin is dead. He was killed testing out a new Henriot plane. Damn this testing business! It kills pilots. I think the engineers or the manufacturers should test their own abortive airplanes. Just like Jimmy McConnell says about the war—if we could get the Kaiser, Hindenburg, King George, King Albert, Franz Joseph, Poincaré, and all the other bosses—get 'em out and let 'em fight out the war while we looked on—that would be the cockeyed tournament for us. But don't hold your breath waiting for something like that to happen.

This afternoon a German single-place ship landed not far from our hangars. It had a dead stick (motor stoppage). The pilot made a perfect landing and after he stepped out of his plane, he walked calmly in the direction of the hangar guards and gave himself up. On examining his machine, we found a funny looking box underneath the centre of the fuselage. We asked the captured Boche what the box was for and he said it was an explosive charge that would go off fifteen seconds after a plug was pulled.

"Why didn't you pull the plug?" asked Captain Thénault.

"Mon Capitaine," he answered very wisely, "it is a new invention and I'm no fool. I've seen these new inventions go off at the wrong time before now. I'd like to destroy my ship, but I have no faith in new inventions."

We treated him kindly.

One of the greatest improvements in our equipment at that time was the advent of the Vickers machine gun. It

used belt-fed ammunition and shot through the propeller. The synchronizing device was known as "System Alçon." Alçon was a French sergeant mechanic. The Vickers gun was a harder shooting gun than the Lewis and it could be depended upon to function, while the Lewis could not. One of the most spectacular victories I ever had in aerial combat happened early in July. It was one of the first experiences I had ever had with the Vickers gun.

On this particular morning I was out at 2.00 A.M. In the next room I heard Jimmy McConnell saying to himself, "Middle of the night, by God! Middle of the night!"

It *was* the middle of the night, but some of us had early orders that morning. I was out first. (This was not usually the rule.) Not being a coffee hound, I went light on the breakfast. At the hangars Leon helped me into my flying suit and my big leather over-shoes. Leon had been out the night before and was still a little tight. Finally I got into my cockpit and began to go over the gun and the controls I could reach. Leon went over all the important outside control connections to see that the cotter pins, lock nuts, locking wires and other safety devices were in place. Then he began to tinker with the engine. It was so dark, all the inspection we did was done by feel rather than by sight.

"Everything ready?"

"*Oui,* monsieur, readee. *Coupez! Essence!*"

That was his way of telling me that he was ready to start the motor. I opened the throttle a bit and saw that the magneto switches were cut. He turned the prop slowly several times.

"Contact!"

Then I cut on the switches and he gave the prop a spin. The little triangular blocks under the wheels held

the machine from going forward. The motor took off at once and began to purr. It's a sweet noise—the purr of a rotary motor. I opened up the throttle and watched the "rev" counter. The motor was turning over beautifully. At the signal Leon pulled away the blocks and I taxied down the field and took off. It was still quite dark. I could see houses and trees, but nothing else. Once off the ground I could see the light of the approaching day off to the east.

My orders indicated a patrol between Fort Douaumont, Fort Veaux and Hill 304, known to us as "Dead Man's Hill." It was all of that—"dead man's hill"! Beneath me the earth was pock-marked from countless thousands of exploded shells. Occasionally there were green patches, where grass and other vegetation grew in spite of the war. At 3,000 meters I saw the sun. It looked like a great luminous orange—out of place, somehow, hanging out there in the eastern heavens. Occasionally, there were clouds. From the ground, or even from the air, clouds look very beautiful—great masses of ice cream. But just try flying into one some time. Everything inside is dark. It's like flying through a damp, dark cellar. As soon as I came out of the cloud I saw some angry-looking anti-aircraft bursts—black ones. They were from the German batteries.

I was still climbing. At 5,000 meters I felt quite safe from the land batteries and went to cruising around studying the ground which was now plainly visible. One of my objectives was a point about ten kilometers inside the German lines. Headquarters had expected a movement of troops at this point. If there were any troops moving I knew that there would be a patrol of German planes out to keep away any French observers or photographers. Just before I arrived over my objective, I noticed three

German planes some distance below me. I changed my direction slightly hoping they would pass me up, or at least lay off until I could gain some additional altitude. At first, I thought they had turned back, when all of a sudden I saw that all three of them were headed for me. I afterwards discovered that the patrol was made up of two single-seaters and one double-seater. As we came closer I picked out one of the Boche planes and maneuvered into the best position for the attack.

Before I knew what was happening, both single-seaters were upon me. One of them pulled off for a moment and during that time, I caught the other at exactly the right angle for my style of attack. At a distance of twenty meters I let him have a long burst from my new Vickers gun. Almost at once flames burst from the cockpit of the Boche machine. Next thing I knew he was on his way down.

But it was no time for idle observation. The other single-seater was having engine trouble, but the double-seater was on my neck in a flash. The pilot opened fire from his front guns at rather a long distance. This is a sign of nervousness. I was very much encouraged. What luck it would be to bring back two scalps from an early, almost before-day patrol! Just then I noticed that the Boche pilot had gotten my range to some extent; at any rate, his stream of fire was cutting across my left wing.

It takes a lot of something not to shoot too soon. I only had 1,000 rounds of ammunition and although that sounds like a lot, it goes in a whale of a hurry when you are shooting it in a machine gun. At last, I opened up on him and we both continued to fire as long as we could without colliding. I was so close that I could see the face and the square head of the observer as the machines rushed past one another. I looped the loop and they

passed under me. As I came out of the loop, I put a few shots into them for good luck. Then the two-seater looped and I passed under. With a *renversement* and a *virage*, I was on his tail again, but it was a dangerous position. The observer was holding his gun on me with a cool, steady hand. We must have begun firing at exactly the same moment.

Suddenly everything went black before me, and I felt a terrible pain in my mouth. I held onto the gun trigger and although I couldn't see, I knew I was shooting—shooting wildly at something. When I recovered my eyesight, which was possibly five seconds later, I saw that my hands were covered with blood. As I looked out over the hood of my little Nieuport I caught sight of the square-headed German observer slumping down out of sight.

By that time I had given up firing, and pulling off my glove, I put my hand up to my face. Everything was covered with blood. My mouth felt as if it was on fire and the back of my neck was being tortured with a thousand agonizing pains. When I tried to move my jaws I found that I had a mouthful of loose teeth. I had undoubtedly been shot in the mouth.

Meanwhile, I had lost sight of the Boche planes; in fact, I had forgotten entirely about the war. It was twenty-five kilometers back to the flying field. My one idea was to get back before I bled to death or fainted out in the air and crashed to my death. God! Those twenty-five kilometers!

After a bit, my eyes got hazy. I took to blinking and finally struck myself in the face with my free hand, so as to shock myself back into a semblance of consciousness. As I approached my field, I cut my motor and landed with a dead stick. Leon rushed over to me yelling something about a citation, but when he looked at my face, he

screamed to the other mechanics for help—screamed like a madman.

They surely gave me wonderful attention. The bullet had made a perfectly clean wound. It had entered my mouth on the right side and gone out the left side of my neck. Beyond a certain amount of stiffness and a diet of soft food for a while, I really suffered very little. The French Army dental outfits in Bar-le-Duc fixed me up with some false teeth and in two weeks I was ready to go again. The new teeth were not ready as soon as that, but I flew anyhow. I discovered that a few teeth more or less didn't affect an aviator's technique at all.

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While I was in the hospital recovering from the shot in the mouth they brought me a bundle of newspapers someone had sent to poor old Victor Chapman. Victor was dead so they passed the papers on to me. Imagine my joy when I opened the bundle and saw the New York *Times,* June 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. I read every line in every one of them. I even read the advertisements,—about Al Jolson playing in Robinson Crusoe, Jr., and Shanley's Restaurant serving a seventy-five-cent seven-course luncheon with music. My, how I did go for those newspapers.

Diary note in the Hospital—some time in July

I see by Victor Chapman's New York *Times* that fifty society girls are going over to Erskine, N. J., to the Hewett Estate to study warfare. Why don't they come over here—we'll show 'em what the war is. Also saw mention of Bill Thaw's treatment at the American Ambulance Hospital in Paris. They mentioned Bob Soubrain too. According to the dope, he's at Pau.

Good God, it's hot! And I'm getting most awfully tired of soft food.

Diary note later—some time in July

More of Victor Chapman's newspapers. American newspapers are full of the chances of war with Mexico. Hughes is about to run for President. And that fellow Balsley got on the front page of the New York *Times* through getting shot down. In re-reading the paper of June the 6th, I have found an account of the Bar-le-Duc bombing raid which is a whiz-bang! Lufbery is mentioned as Lovebury. When I saw him today I called him "Lovey" and he was as sore as hell. The dentists are working on my teeth, but I'm planning to fly "muy pronto." Tomorrow perhaps.

Diary note—same day

Jesus, how I do miss Victor Chapman! Every time I pick up a newspaper I think of him. Jimmy McConnell is recovered from his crackup. We are going to have a grand presentation of decorations as soon as Thaw is able to travel.

CHAPTER XX

My! It was good to get back into the air, particularly at that time when the Verdun offensive was going so strong. The French dentists were doing a very fancy job of my new teeth and a rather painful one too. I decided that I would refrain from attacking a two-place ship from the rear and above. It would be from the rear and below for two-placers, after this. Another good resolution I made about that time was about going Boche-hunting miles behind the lines. Every day or so some of the boys would come in with a long cock-and-bull story about having shot down a German plane eighty-nine kilometers behind the German lines. No one was there but Germans, and, of course, no confirmation came through. I always listened to those stories with my tongue in my cheek and finally decided to do my fighting up near the front lines, unless I was sent back into Germany and then, of course, I'd go and like it. What I couldn't understand and can't understand to this day is why they went so far looking for a fight when all the fighting they could handle was right under their noses—right on the front lines.

And then those Germans eighty-nine kilometers behind the lines were not doing the Allies any particular harm. My idea was to bump off the Boche who were doing us wrong, the ones who were up on the front lines—the observers, the photographers, and the chasse pilots who were flying over the front lines all the time. But that eighty-nine kilometers-behind-the-front stunt went on to the final day of the war. In some outfits it grew to be a kind of mania.

Why, do you know that later in the war an American Major with a complete squadron of American-made Liberty airplanes flew over the top, lost his way, ran into some heavy weather, but just kept on going because his orders said to go somewhere, and finally was forced to land at a German airdrome miles and miles and miles behind the front lines? The Boche were pretty clever about the letter they sent back to the American G.H.Q. It is rumored that their note went like this:

"We want to thank you folks for the squadron of Liberties. You-all were mighty kind in passing them over to us intact. We don't think much of the planes; however, we will no doubt be able to use them in some way. But please advise us what the hell to do with the blooming Major. Yours very truly, Kaiser Wilhelm's Air Corps, etc."

This, of course, is my version of what they must have said, but it's not so very far from the truth. What surprises me most is that one of the flying lieutenants didn't take charge of the squadron when they discovered that the Major was a dud; or granting that the Major was not a dud, how someone didn't think of destroying the planes once they found they had landed in enemy territory.

Diary note, July 20, 1916

There is an epidemic of moustaches in the Escadrille. Spinach on the upper lip or even in a purée with pulverized hard-boiled egg has never interested me. I shall go to my grave with a clean-shaven face. When I was in the Foreign Legion I used to shave in the remains of my coffee. Not that I cared particularly for a coffee-flavored shave, but that I had no other kind of liquid handy.

Last night when I came home from town I had

Rumsey in tow. He was in excellent spirits, singing little snatches of a song about an "English king a thousand years ago, who ruled his land with an iron hand, but his mind was weak and low." When we got to the villa I piloted Laurence up the winding stone stairs. Just as I got to the top, I relaxed my attention a moment and down went Mr. Rumsey of Buffalo, New York, right to the bottom of the stairway.

I followed him down and found him sitting on the bottom step fanning himself with a little branch of a tree. He looked up and said:

"That you, Bertie, you old bozo!"

"Yes," I said, "this is me. Get up now, goddamit, we're goin' in the house."

"Why, say, Bertie, I nearly fell, didn't I?"

So I gathered him up and dragged him up the steps and threw him in the villa. Rumsey and I are very good friends. I like him very much.

Every afternoon these days I mix a water bucket of Manhattan cocktails. I'm the bartender extraordinaire, but I don't drink. Wouldn't do to mix a small container of cocktails, as the boys take 'em with a half-pint tin cup. And those ambulance men! They drink like fishes. And the visiting Americans—those boys are long on drinking healths to so-called heroes. They give me a pain.

Diary note, July 21, 1916

Had a Heinie down to 300 meters this morning and, by God, he gave me the slip. He was flying a two-place fighter and I give him credit for being a hell of a good pilot. I had used up all my ammunition except about twenty rounds. I was saving this for the last dive, but when I got into position for the aforementioned

maneuver, the Heinie left. He just went home like hell beatin' tanbark. So I said enough's enough, and I went home too. Leon was slightly miffed because I didn't bring home a victory. It's getting to be something terrible—you don't know whether you're fightin' the war for the French Government or the motor mechanics.

This afternoon I encountered Captain Boelke. He is flying a new type Fokker fighter. It is painted jet black with white crosses. All the other German planes are marked with black crosses on a white field. I recognized him at once, as I have encountered him before. And, as usual, I could not find a single opening in his defense. He, on the other side, could not find a convenient way of attacking me, so we stunted for each other and went on our way. A good pilot can always defend himself in a single combat affair. Boelke, like many of the Germans with high scores, makes a specialty of popping off slow machines, photographers, recalage machines, day bombers, etc.

It was on July 23rd, that I marked up a score in my favor. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. That's the most I remember about the fight. I know this because I was wearing a new wrist watch. A wounded German prisoner had given it to an ambulance man and the ambulance man had sold it to me. I say sold, but it wasn't exactly that way. I took the watch in lieu of an I.O.U. Now that ambulance man was a gambling man; he believed he was what we call "right," but he wasn't quite as "right" as he thought he was; therefore, the new watch.

But to go on with the more important details. That victory on the 23rd wasn't much to crow about. At first I thought it might be interesting. It was one of the new

type Fokker fighters, all decorated up like a new saloon. But that German began to shoot too soon and thereby gave himself away as a beginner, or a very nervous pilot. I waited, as usual, and made sure there was no one sitting in a back seat somewhere. The memory of that last mouthful of loose teeth was still very clear. As soon as I was sure that I was attacking a single-seater I hopped in for all I was worth. I dived and he dived. He pulled a very tight *virage* and I did the same. He was firing all the time. As I came out of my *virage* I raised the nose of my plane a little bit and there before my sights was a perfect target. I only had time to give him two short bursts.

After that he turned over on his back, then slipped over on his nose and spun like a bastard for more than 10,000 feet. Altogether, the fight lasted about thirty seconds. I followed down as far as was necessary to see where he crashed. The remains of the plane hit the ground between Vaux and Daniloup. All the observers in France saw the fight and confirmation was an easy matter. Leon was much relieved at my success. It seems that the other mechanics had been giving him a slight raspberry on my ability to shoot down the Boche. I had been told that since the shot I got in the mouth the enlisted men had given me the soubriquet of "the iron chewer." That made two good nicknames—the "Ozark snake-stomper" and the "flying iron chewer."

On July 30, 1916, Luf (Lufbery) brought down his first Boche since his transfer to N-124. It happened in the neighborhood of Etain. All I ever knew about it was that Luf claimed it and the French observers confirmed it and that night Luf wanted to lick Gitchy-Goomie again.

Now let's get that fellow Lufbery straight. Born in

Connecticut. At eighteen he ran away from his parental home and started traveling. And as the old song goes, "he was some travelin' man." He'd been everywhere. Marc Poupre said that Lufbery had hung his hat in more countries than any other man living, and Poupre ought to know. Lufbery spoke a little bit of all the known languages and a lot of the important ones. He was not a big fellow in stature, but he was a powerfully quick lad in a fight—didn't matter much what kind of a fight it happened to be, as long as it was a good fight.

And Luf knew things, not in an educated way, but in the way of men who are always looking for information. Marc Poupre said that Raoul Lufbery was a walking encyclopedia. He could tell you about any city that amounted to a damn anywhere in the civilized or uncivilized world. He could tell you how to spell the name of the city, where it was located, when the train left, what the jails were like, how the police treated gang fighters, if the food was any good; in fact, he could supply any information needed by a soldier of fortune, and that's what Luf was.

His two years in the Philippines with the U.S. Army had taught him what the war was. He was a marksman long before he came to us.

So, on July 30th, he got his first official victory in the Lafayette Escadrille. We were beginning to develop some excellent new fighting pilots.

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On the 1st of August, 1916, I had a new experience—balloon jumping. Nimmie Prince was the jumper and I was sent out to protect Nimmie while he was performing his little act. Prince's machine was equipped with six big sky rockets, three on each side. They were attached

to the struts and arranged so that they went off by an electrical contact. They would burn for two hundred meters, and if one of them struck the balloon, the observer would jump and the balloon would go up in a cloud of black smoke.

Up at headquarters we were shown on the map where the balloon was supposed to be. Of course, they showed us where the balloon had been. Balloons were being constantly moved about. We knew this, but we didn't say so. The officers at headquarters knew it also. When we took off, Nimmie and I agreed to get a balloon—it might not be "the" balloon, but just the same, it would count.

As we expected, the balloon indicated by headquarters was not to be seen, but there was another, tugging at its steel cable made fast to a motor truck on the Montfaucon-Varennes road. It was a perfectly clear day and realizing this, we went as high as our Nieuports would carry us so as to fool the German observers as long as possible. When we got into the right position, we nosed over and started diving. A balloon job is either a success or a failure the very first time you try, as the crew on the ground haul in their "sausage" at the first note of warning from the observers.

In this case, we were diving with the sun at our backs, and were not observed until we had gained a great speed. When at last the warning was given and the ground crew began to reel in the steel cable every anti-aircraft battery in the neighborhood opened up. It was a veritable hail-storm of bullets. But there was nothing for us to do, now that we had started. Down, down, down we went, until we came within range of the great lumbering gas bag. The reeling-in speed of the balloon was nothing to the speed of our dive, so, of course, we overtook the thing

very promptly. Nimmie withheld his rockets as long as he could. Once I thought the electrical fusing contraption had gone out of order, when, all of a sudden, a streak of fire shot ahead of us. It was Nimmie's sky rockets. From where I was, they seemed to have landed in the very middle of the balloon. Then I saw both German observers go over the side. The next moment their parachutes opened and they sailed down to safety.

As I pulled away, a long column of fire shot skyward. We had jumped our first balloon, but not without considerable risk to ourselves. Nimmie's plane had been hit slightly, but my plane was hit more than slightly. I was flying left wing low and on examination I saw that the fabric on the top of my center section was badly frazzled. If we had been attacked by German airplanes at that moment, we would have been shot down without doubt. At least, I would have, because the anti-aircraft and the machine gunning I had gone through had riddled my plane.

All I know about the trip back home is that I had motor trouble, and flew along near the ground in case the damned wings came off. I landed without mishap, but when the plane rolled to a stop, the wings collapsed around me as if they were made of cardboard. My flying wires had not been cut, but my landing wires were gone entirely. The plane would stay together in the air, but on the ground it simply caved in.

There was a considerable celebration over the balloon. Nimmie had a long conversation with someone at headquarters. He finally convinced them that balloons could be moved and could also be shot down if the pilots had guts enough and didn't mind flying in a barrage as thick as pea soup.

CHAPTER XXI

According to my records of this part of the war, Lufbery joined the Lafayette Escadrille on May 22nd; Clyde Balsley on (date missing); Chouteau Johnson on May 29th; Dudley Hill on June 9th; Laurence Rumsey (on date missing); Diddier Masson on June 19th; Pavelka on August 11th; Fred Prince, Bob Soubrain and Willis Haviland on October 19th; and Ronald Hosker on December 11th. No one could keep track of the great numbers of Americans who put in for training in the Lafayette as the war got under way and the news about the Escadrille became circulated. The names I have given you-all before as the original seven and the names of the above pilots are the really important people, after all. There were others and we shall consider them later.

What began to interest us at this moment was the persistent rumor of a new, powerful and strongly built fighting ship. The Germans were having the best of things because of their engineering advances. We heard that the British were making some very clever ships, and we also had favorable reports from the Italians. We wanted a ship that would dive as long as one was willing to hold the "stick" forward and one that would come out of a dive when the stick was pulled back—come out without ripping the wings off.

The French had seen what aircraft could do at the battle of Verdun when the air was full of both German and French planes from dawn to dark. The flying of fast pursuit ships at night was coming into vogue about this time too. The French had developed night *chasse* pilots

for the defense of Paris and the English were doing the same as a counter gesture against the zeppelin raids over London. In fact, we had news of several successful attacks made by English airplanes against the lighter-than-air zeppelins.

Of course, our job was flying and fighting and not engineering, but we couldn't keep from thinking out improvements all the while.

Diary note, August 3, 1916

That fellow Lufbery has had two successes in two successive days, his two lucky days being July 30th and 31st. Some ambulance men told us yesterday that the handsome MacMonigle fellow (who is also an ambulance man) is going into aviation. Also, news comes from Paris that Carter Ovington, son of Mrs. Ovington, the secretary of the Lafayette Escadrille, is dead set on flying with us.

Diary note, August 4, 1916

Jimmy McConnell, who crashed his ship between two trees and thought he was unhurt, is in the Hospital at Paris. After his crash, he went to Paris with Nimmie Prince. In Paris, Nimmie met his brother, Paul Prince, and together they took care of poor old McConnell. But his back got so bad that they finally appealed to the hospital authorities and now Jimmy is under the eye of the Medical Department. He thinks he can get back by October, but if the story Nimmie tells is true, Jimmy will be in a lot longer than this fall.

Lufbery had another victory today. That makes three now. He'll soon be in the "ace" class. His fight today was over Alancourt.

Saw two French pilots buried yesterday. They

decorated the graves with the remains of the smashed airplane. Personally, I think this business of displaying the remains of airplanes on the graves of dead pilots is very bad. It's bad for the troops. Half burned or otherwise demolished remains of airplanes belong on the junk heap, and if I had my way, that's where they would land.

Lufbery is a mushroom hound. Every time it rains he goes out and gathers some mushrooms. The French say he is going on a *reconnaissance des champignons.*

The reason we have so many visiting ambulance men and other hungry soldiers is possibly because Diddier Masson recently of C-18 and N-68 is our Chef de Popote. (This would correspond to Mess Officer in the United States Army.) Masson is a whizbang at getting up the kind of food that makes the troops want to fight, and he's a damn good aviator too.

Balsley will recover, but they tell us that he will possibly not fly again.

From what I have observed in air fighting, I believe that the rapid decisive attack is the thing that won oftenest in the long run. Nungesser, Lufbery, Guynemer, Dorme, Heurteaux, Deullin—I have seen them all in action and I am forced to admit that combating around one's antagonist is a very dull and exasperating procedure, compared with the quick dive, fire, and pull-away method. Usually, it's all over in twenty seconds—either it's a victory or you go down afire. For, if you live to pull away at all, you must have fired with great precision and having fired, you must have pulled away with everything you had.

Collisions in the air were more frequent than one might think, and I do not refer to the many unfortunate colli-

sions caused by inexperienced pilots at flying schools. I shall never forget one day in the early summer of 1916, while we were in the very middle of the Verdun offensive. I was flying along with a French captain—a man I had known in civilian days back in 1912. We were not so very far from Fort Daoumont, when we ran into two two-place Aviatics. I took on one of them and after my first burst, something seemed to have happened to the engine on the Boche plane—at least, my antagonist dropped down as fast as he could with the propeller standing perfectly still. I lost him in some clouds and presently gave up the chase.

When I got back to where I had left my French captain friend, I saw that his ship had gone afire. Before I could do anything to help square the situation by attacking the victorious Boche, the French captain dived his burning ship full into the German plane. For a moment, the wings of the two planes held together. Then they fell apart and fell to the ground, a swirling mass of flames and smoke.

Back at the field I found that they had reported me down afire. How glad Leon was to see me taxiing up to the hangars for ammunition and gasoline. I tell you all this story to show you that collisions actually happened.

Now to go back to the business of attack. The reason the fight is often over in a very short time is because one pilot or the other gains the offensive. And the man with the offensive has most points in his favor.

I suppose that every military pilot who ever flew out to meet an enemy sooner or later developed a fighting technique of his own. Later on in the war, the Americans with their usual mania for standardization tried to teach their pilots a cut-and-dried formula—one they could follow at all times and be sure of success. But as soon as the

American pilots got up to the front and tried out the cut-and-dried formula, they discovered that no two fights were alike. So the Americans who lived through the first half-dozen combats worked out something individual and thereupon came home to tell the story of how it happened. No two fights were ever alike. We met different situations every time we encountered the Boche. Altitudes altered situations slightly. In very high, thin air the Nieuports maneuvered very well, better perhaps than the Spads did, because the Spad was a heavier machine. At low altitudes they all handled about the same.

As soon as one gets above 10,000 feet, the thinness of the air becomes noticeable, but the air as a rule is very smooth at the higher altitudes. Earth bumps from heat waves are usually felt down nearer the earth. In early days these bumpy places in the air were referred to as "Swiss cheese air." The modern airplane is seldom bothered with this condition.

Captain Georges Guynemer used to say that the first fifteen to twenty seconds should turn the trick. He used to dive on his antagonist and hold his fire until the last possible moment. If his antagonist was firing all the while, Guynemer dived just the same. He had no idea of protecting himself. René Fonck, on the other hand, was a master of self-preservation. His ship was never shot up. In fact, after countless combats, his Spad was still intact, while Guynemer had to have an entirely new outfit every two weeks. His mechanics were working over "Vieux Charles" all the time.

René Dorme, or "Père" Dorme as we called him, was known as "the unpuncturable." He used the same tactics employed by Guynemer. Several times his Spad held together by luck and the grace of God and brought him home to the landing field of the famous Cigognes (the

Stork Escadrille, originally N-3). But Dorme went down ultimately to the very same fate that caught the miraculous Georges Guynemer, and Dorme's loss was a great one to French aviation.

I admit that I seldom thought of protecting myself at the expense of a rapidly concluded contest, and for that reason, I came home time and time again with my plane full of holes, to say nothing of my body.

Nerve and a steady hand are what decided most air battles. I have found that the best tactics are to go straight at the Boche. While you're doing this, he of course gets a good chance at you, but if you have nerve enough, you might get in, or rather you will get in more shots from a more favorable position than when you maneuver around one another in an attempt to gain a good firing position. The reason I stick to this idea of rapid attack is because I have seen all the great ones in action and have spent many an evening listening to them discuss the details of air fighting.

Diary note, August 8, 1916

Lufbery had another success today. And Lieutenant de Laage de Meux did a very heroic thing. He was out on a patrol with Nimmie Prince and Kiffen Rockwell. Kiffen became disconnected from the patrol and Nimmie was attacked by three Boche. Lieutenant de Laage, although he had exhausted his ammunition, dived into the fight and saved Prince at a moment when there were two Boche on Prince's tail, each pumping a stream of lead into the poor boy. Of course, it was a bluff, but the Boche never knew that. They beat it back to Germany and Nimmie Prince lived to tell the story. Incidentally, Lieutenant de Laage never mentioned it and even now denies that it ever happened. Thereupon, de Laage goes up in our estimation.

This man de Laage de Meux has had a whale of a career as a soldier. He was a cavalryman in the early days and had several horses shot from under him during the first retreat and later during the battle of the Marne. He has wounds all over his body. Bravo, de Laage!

I'm going to Paris to get a new ship tomorrow, and I suppose I'll have to visit Doctor Gros and tell him all about poor old Victor Chapman.

In one of the hangars the other day I saw the remains of McConnell's ship. It is too badly busted up to repair, but they are keeping it in case they need any of the uncracked parts. On the side of the fuselage were the letters, "M. A. C.," and now the poor devil is up at Paris in the hospital. Christ! I wish he was with us! I like Jimmy.

There are rumors that a negro named Eugene Bullard, who comes originally from some out-of-the-way place in Georgia, has transferred from the Foreign Legion to the flying corps for training. He expects to join the Lafayette Escadrille. They say he made a great success as a *soldat à pied*. He is one of these big burly black boys who apparently came to France on a mule ship and couldn't keep out of a good fight.

CHAPTER XXII

Diary note, August 14th

That was a great gag I worked on the French authorities, and it lengthened out my leave five days. Originally, I was supposed to have only one day, but Lufbery put me onto a good one and I worked it to a standstill. You see, the French Intelligence Department knows that I have traveled all over the world and have spent a lot of time in Germany, so when I called one of their operators on the telephone and told him that I had just seen a German officer dressed up like a middle-aged French business man, they took the bait, hook, line and sinker.

They proposed that they supply me with a shadowing expert and let both of us get on the job, but I discouraged the idea. All I needed was time and a little cash. The Headquarters supplied both of these commodities and for six days, I did all the cafés and restaurants in Paris looking for my fugitive.

Of course, Margot helped me spend the money. She was originally a seamstress. Later she married a French officer who was killed in 1915. She came into his money and now she owns a little hotel on the Boulevard Montparnasse. When in Paris, Margot's hotel is "home" for papa, and one of the distressing problems of travel is thereby solved—namely, the expense of hotel accommodations.

Did all the diplomatic socializing I was supposed to do. Visited Mrs. Ovington and Doctor Gros. The Doctor was not in town. The Slades were wonderful

to me, as usual. But my new *marraine,* Margot, was the success of the trip, and Lufbery's suggestion was what made it all possible.

My new Nieuport is a peach. The new ship we have been hearing about will be a Spad, and from what they told me at le Bourget it will give us mastery of the air. (The Spad outfit is the old Deperdussin Company taken over and directed by M. Bleriot.)

In spite of the fun I had on this trip, there was a note of sadness about it. The first afternoon I encountered Captain d'Harcourt who was at one time second in command of MS-38 back at Chalons. D'Harcourt told me all about Eugene Bertin's death—how Eugene had a premonition of what was going to happen to him. I hate to see men like Bertin bumped off, but as the saying goes, the best men are finished off first; that's possibly why I've lasted so long.

Diary note, August 15th

A pilot of American origin named Pavelka joined us the 11th of this month. He was with Kiffen Rockwell in the Foreign Legion. Seems, according to Kiffen, that Pavelka saved Kiffen's life when the Legion was attacking up in the north end of the line, somewhere near Arras. That was after Bill Thaw and Jimmy Bach and I left the Legion for the Flying Corps. Kiffen Rockwell had been very desperately wounded, and Pavelka carried him from the field, where he surely would have died, to a dressing station. And all the while, Pavelka was wounded too! So you see, we have a damned good man with us. Needless to say, he and Kiffen are most awfully good friends.

Lufbery wants to get leave to visit his girl in Chartres, but the Captain can't see it. Last time Luf damned

near finished off the entire police force of that charming little town. So it seems that Luf will have to stay at Bar-le-Duc.

Now comes the news of Dennis Dowd's death. He was one of the original members of the American Volunteer Corps, who, with us, joined the Foreign Legion. After going through the battles in the Champagne, he was desperately wounded, and later took to flying. He of course planned to join us in the Lafayette Escadrille. While he was recovering from the wounds received as an infantryman in the Foreign Legion, he became acquainted with a very lovely French girl from Neuilly. They fell seriously in love and had planned to be married a few days ago. But Dennis was killed instantly in an airplane crash August 11, 1916. He had finished his flying training. You never can tell when the bullet has your name on it these days! I surely feel sorry for the girl.

Diary note, August 16th

This afternoon I mixed a small water pail of Manhattan cocktails, as usual. Among the visitors were two ambulance men. One of them (a stranger to me), having finished his drink, motioned to me with his glass and said:

"Here, boy, fill this for me, will you!"

I had my tunic off, so of course not knowing me, he couldn't tell what my rank was. Everyone must have expected me to walk over and tell the young man what the war was. An embarrassed pause followed; then Lieutenant de Laage stood up and said in his grandest manner:

"Monsieur d'Ambulance, I have the pleasure of presenting Adjutant Bert Hall. Adjutant Hall has been

a *pilot de combat* in the Lafayette Escadrille since April of this year and before that he was a member of the famous MS-38. If you would like to know what Adjutant Hall's score is, you may examine his *Carnet de Vol.* It's in the office."

After that, I felt like a damned fool and the ambulance man nearly fell on his face apologizing and all such rot. What de Laage wanted to do was to challenge the young fellow to a duel, and the poor ambulance fellow would have about as much chance at such a game as the celluloid cat in hell. De Laage is a whale of a swordsman.

The next victory credited to the Escadrille was marked up beside my name. There were really two of them, but only one counted. They happened four days apart—August 24th and August 28th.

On the 24th, I had the advantage of scattered clouds. I had been with a patrol flying over Etain. Our time was up and our gasoline was about exhausted. Because of the clouds, I became detached from the others and flying along alone, I noticed a patrol of Aviatics heading for our lines, flying along about 500 meters below my altitude. This is one time I used clouds to great advantage. By sizing up the situation, I decided that a long forty-five degree dive would bring me out of a large billowy cloud just about the time the Aviatic patrol passed by, and even though my gas supply was low, I would be diving in the direction of my lines all the time, with clouds handy to protect me in case the other Aviatics decided to pick me off.

So I pushed over and dived through the cloud, but when I came out, the Aviatics were nowhere to be seen. I looked everywhere, and finally gave it up as a bad job

and started for home. Just then I discovered that the Aviatics had done the same thing I had done at almost exactly the same moment. They had sighted a patrol of Nieuports and because of their superiority of numbers, they had hot-footed it down to the attack. It was a beautiful picture to watch the combat from such a lovely ringside seat.

Suddenly, I noticed that one of the Aviatics had pulled away and was beating it back to Germany and safety. I have never known whether he had a gun jam or just a bad case of buck fever; anyhow, I piqued over and went for him for all I was worth. He didn't try to attack me, but he did try to maneuver into a less dangerous position. If he had held his maneuver until a little later, I might have missed him, but he started too soon. It was just like starting to shoot before your antagonist comes into range.

After he did his maneuver, which was a good one, I dived right ahead and let him have a burst. From the excellence of his first maneuver, I expected him to go into some very expert kind of combat tactics, but he merely tipped over and started for the ground.

I believe he cracked up before he hit the ground, but owing to the clouds, the French observation posts could never give me credit for a clean victory. So I credited myself with it and let it go at that.

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On the 28th, it was a very simple matter. A very early morning patrol. A Boche photographic machine. I dived out of the sun. It was a running fight, with the observer shooting all the time. As I think of it, I am sure it didn't last longer than a minute, but it seemed to be an eternity of firing and wondering if the observer would continue to miss me.

LIEUT. WILLIAM THAW RECEIVING AN AMERICAN FLAG MADE BY THE EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES TREASURY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Once his bursts cut through my top wing, but when the flames burst from his forward cockpit, I knew that it was all over. The confirmation was a very easy matter. Lufbery said:

"Afire, Bertie?"

"Yes, Luf, over Fort Douaumont."

"God, it's awful to burn up in the air. I'll never do it. I'll jump first."

CHAPTER XXIII

By September the first, we began to notice the presence of fall. Lufbery made his usual excursions in search of mushrooms and Sampson, the chef of N-124, cooked the most delicious dishes by combining Luf's mushrooms with the things Masson brought in from Bar-le-Duc. Our dinners were very interesting. The conversation covered every conceivable phase of life. We used to consider ourselves very lucky if we had an infantry or artillery officer with us, as in that way, we would find out something about the war on the ground. Because, although most of us had been infantrymen once upon a time, the actual ground tactics had been so changed that the front line war was something of a mystery to us.

Of course, we talked flying. We couldn't miss it. How could anyone miss it with four to six hours of it every day. In English messes, I am told that conversations about the ladies were avoided. Such was not the case in our mess. With the lady-killers we had in the early days of the Lafayette it would have been a silly rule.

As the battle at Verdun died down and the French knew they would hold their lines, rumors began to spread through our hangars. The enlisted men said they had heard from some unknown source that we were to go to a new front. Perhaps it was Gallipoli; perhaps it was the Russian front. No one knew exactly.

Finally the news became official. We were to pack up our personal belongings, go up to le Bourget, get new equipment and fly away to a new sector. Our old planes would be taken over by a French outfit—one that had been in the southern end of the line.

I took my little ship out for the last hop on the morning of September 14th and when I taxied her up to the hangars, there stood Leon, ready to put "B-E-R-T" to bed for the last time. It was with some considerable sadness that I waved that little Nieuport good-bye. Lufbery felt the same way about his plane and so did Kiffen Rockwell.

Captain Thénault thumped on the piano for the last time. We packed our stuff in a motor truck, gathered up "Fram"—Captain Thénault's police-dog—and that was the end of our stay at Bar-le-Duc.

On the train to Paris, Lufbery said to me:

"Bertie, we had some good times back at that old villa, and we lost some good men too. Time'll come when we'll remember that place and say, 'Those were the happy days.' Eh, Bertie!"

I agreed that there had been happy days. Luf didn't live long enough to reminisce very much; but Bill Thaw and I have done it, and a few of the others who joined us later. Those were the happy days.

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Our orders said that we would be allowed a week's leave in Paris. Our personnel at that time was as follows:

Captain Thénault.
Lieutenant de Laage de Meux.
Lieutenant Thaw.
Adjutant Bert Hall.
Adjutant Nimmie Prince.
Adjutant Lufbery.
Adjutant Masson.
Sergeant Kiffen Rockwell.
Sergeant Hill.
Sergeant Pavelka.

Sergeant Johnson.
Sergeant Rumsey.
Fram, the police dog.

We soon forgot our sentimental feelings about Bar-le-Duc. The train ride to Paris turned out to be an all day picnic. The laughs were rather forced at first, but it was like the military bands leaving a graveyard. They always play a stirring march to put the troops in a good humor. That's what we did en route to Paris. We were whistling to scare away our regrets. Victor Chapman, Clyde Balsley, Jim McConnell, Elliot Cowdin, Dennis Dowd, Jimmy Bach, Eugene Bertin—these names had become history. But we were gay withal—a holiday was ahead of us.

We hadn't been in Paris two hours until one of our boys came running, stuttering and all out of breath. He had cut an advertisement from the newspaper.

"Look fellows, look, great stuff! Woman wants to sell a lion cub. Let's buy it for the Escadrille. Mascot, good luck, lion cub, doctor's wife."

"Christamighty," said Lufbery, "don't be a damned fool! What would we do with a bloody lion cub! Why, grow up, don't be a continual ass!"

"No, Luf. A lion is lucky, and we can get this one cheap!"

No form of argument would prevent him from dragging us out to the far side of northern Paris to visit the doctor's wife. The lion cub had been born on the Mediterranean Sea. The lioness was en route to a zoo in western France. The moment we saw the baby lion, we fell for him. He was a him! With blue eyes, and the most adorable manner. He cost us 125 francs. We named him on the spot, "Whiskey."

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM THAW AND THE LION CUB "WHISKEY." LATER THE BOYS DECIDED THAT WHISKEY NEEDED A GIRL FRIEND AND ANOTHER CUB WAS PROCURED. HER NAME WAS "SODA."

THIS IS THE FIRST PICTURE TAKEN OF RAOUL LUFBERY AFTER HE HAD BEEN MADE A MAJOR IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY. IT SHOWS HIM IN THE AMERICAN UNIFORM, WITHOUT THE SHOULDER STRAP TO HIS SAM BROWNE BELT.

Whiskey was the success of the trip. That animal went everywhere—to every bar, to every restaurant, in taxicabs, along the boulevards. Whiskey was a distinct success.

One morning I went over to the Aviation Headquarters to look up some mail, and while there I met Captain Brocard, the commanding officer of the Cigognes, and Captain d'Harcourt. D'Harcourt asked me if I should like to go back into a French Escadrille. I said I wouldn't mind, now that the Lafayette was so well filled with pilots. At that, d'Harcourt smiled and said he would call on me soon. Said he would communicate with the Quartier General and make a formal request for me.

Captain Brocard told me of Guynemer's success. Georges Guynemer was a member of the N-3 Escadrille, commanded by Captain Brocard.

Diary note, September 17, 1916

Since the failure of the Germans at Verdun, the war has taken on a new aspect. The French have more confidence in an ultimate victory than ever before. The losses at Verdun have been colossal, but Verdun is a symbol to the French. They believe that any army emerging from such a battle with the slightest semblance of success can't keep from winning. Our lion cub Whiskey is the talk of the town. Last night he nearly bit a gendarme. Whenever we take him near a dog of any kind, the dog gets buck fever and sets up a wail like a lost soul. We've already had our money's worth out of Whiskey ten times over. Just wait until he grows up. We'll sick 'im on everything.

Diary note, September 18th

I visited Jimmy McConnell today. He's worse off than he thought at first. It'll be next spring before he gets back. We have taken on a recruit, D. R. I met D. at the unofficial Aviation Headquarters, Hôtel d'Elaine. Elaine is a charming person who takes care of aviators and "writes it on the cuff" as we say. Every time one of our boys is bounced off, she writes off from five to twenty thousand francs. But she breaks even on other scores.

D. was sitting on the floor when I found him. He said someone had broken his leg. This is what had happened. While he was sitting at the bottom of a stairway, one of the boys had taken D's. left leg and, placing it on a higher step, had jumped on it. All this happened during one of D's. unattentive moments. After the jumping match and the pain that accompanied the performance, D. was very attentive. He blamed Lufbery for having injured him. This was a mistake. I found Lufbery an hour later in another part of the house quietly tearing up a feather-bed. He had feathers all over the place. When I saw him, he was amusing himself by ripping up the ticking into fuzzy-edged ribbons. I never have been able to understand that boy's desire for destruction. He surely enjoyed it, too. Elaine put the price of the mattress on the cuff, but I doubt if Lufbery will ever pay for it.

Whiskey continues to be the chief topic of conversation. Bill Thaw has taken charge of the animal. We are worried about how we will get the little devil to our next location.

These French women are funny. The first question they ask is:

"Tell us, please, is it a boy lion or a girl lion?" As if it mattered to anybody except a lion!

Our friend Mata-Hari is going away. She won't tell where, but it is rumored by several mannequins that she is going to Belgium. Must be true about her being a spy. But if it is, why don't they take her in? Why let her get away?

(Future developments proved Mata-Hari to be one of the most desperate spy women in the history of espionage. But I must say she never tried any tricks on me—never did that woman ask me a single question. And I knew her well—very, very well, in fact.)

Diary note, September 20, 1916

Well, they sent us back to Luxeuil-les-Bains. The train ride from Paris up here was a whizbang. First, they wouldn't let Whiskey on the train, so Bill Thaw and Lufbery got a paper box and crated the poor little devil. That seemed to satisfy the French conductors. Fifteen minutes later Whiskey got lonesome and in about three bites chawed his way out of the box. There was almost a panic on the train. The conductor had his finger bitten and we had to take turns at quieting the baby lion for fear they would unload us as undesirable customers. The excitement was really worth the price of admission.

Diary note, September 21st

There are no machines for us at Luxeuil, so we have to wait and kill time. The Royal Naval Air Force, an English outfit, has moved in at the Luxeuil Flying Field and are waiting for a favorable chance to bomb hell out of the Rhine towns. Mata-Hari would prob-

ably like to have this news—perhaps she already has it.

Lufbery's mushroom hunting has become a kind of mania. Early yesterday morning I was taking a walk not far from our field when I came upon a little stream of water. It's the clearest stream of water I've seen in a long while. There are some trout in it.

The first few days of our return to Luxeuil were very quiet. We became acquainted with the Britishers in the Royal Naval Air Force, and to our great surprise found that they had an American-made airplane in their hangars. It was a Curtiss JN-4—a Jenny—and I'll bet it was the only Jenny that ever saw the war. The Royal Naval pilots used it for gunnery practice only. It never went over the top. It was as bedraggled as Jennies usually are, and was rather humorous looking to us, even at that far-away time before we had become accustomed to them.

One afternoon in the latter part of September, before our ships had arrived, an English officer came to us and said:

"Say, you bloomin' Yanks, let's call the war off and celebrate."

So we invited them to dinner down at the Hôtel Lion d'Or. Everything went on beautifully until the "binge" began and then there was a slight tendency to throw plates—just playful like—now a plate and now a cup and now a saucer. The management of the Lion d'Or got worried, but it was of no use. No amount of worrying could have saved the dishes. Before the party broke up all the moveable equipment was a washout. That's what those blighters meant when they said "celebrate."

But everyone voted that it had been a good party, smashed crockery and black eyes notwithstanding. Among the British pilots were many Canadians and Australians

and men from New South Wales. Oh, they were a fine lot of troops, but they did love their breakage. I might say right here that dish-crashing has been a tradition in the Air Service. Even today when aviators get together, there is a big bill for demolished china.

Next morning as soon as we were all together we decided to do a good job of the Britishers' equipment at the very next opportunity. We would show them what a good smash-up was—a smash-up with trimmings, etc.

We didn't have to wait long for the opportunity. By noontime, a message came from the British C.O., inviting us to mess that evening.

"Ah, ha," said Lufbery. "Now we get even with the Limies. You, Kiffen, and you, Nimmie, and you, Bert, don't fail me tonight. And when I give the signal, bear down with both feet."

I couldn't begin to tell you all the things that happened at that celebration. We called off the war and went to it. At first, the British Commanding Officer proposed toasts to the King and to President Poincaré and to President Wilson and a lot of folks. And then he made a short speech. Captain Thénault responded in very good English and that ended the civilities. The dinner was excellent, although I don't remember exactly what we had. I kept watch of Lufbery. His eyes were as alert as a fox's; he was watching everyone at once. The situation was positively marvelous. The Britishers knew we were going to do wrong by them but they didn't know when or how. They just rather relaxed and let it come.

Well, to make a long story short, it came like a typhoon. I believe they expected the excellence and the quantity of the drinks to put us in such a condition that we could not carry on, but they misjudged us. When the time came I never knew who gave the signal, but the

carnage was terrible. The chairs, the tables, the dishes, the bottles, everything went before the energy of our attack.

When we started, the barracks was divided up by many little partitions. When we finished, it was all one big room. The partitions were all down—they disappeared before the football rushes. God, it was wonderful!—the ripping and the crashing of the lumber and the complete devastation of the cots and the other equipment. The Britishers didn't mind at all; as a matter of fact, I once saw Captain Thénault and the British Major laughing as if they would explode and drinking each other's healths over and over again. They looked on as if it was a rehearsed stage play.

"Fram," the Captain's dog, got into it too. He barked and howled and leaped around with the greatest glee. Just before the celebration was said to be over, we heard some shots outside. We looked out and there to our astonishment was a tall Canadian from Vancouver shooting at a book. The book was being held at arm's length by none other than Raoul Lufbery. The Canadian had been a member of the Northwestern Mounted Police. He could shoot too, because he was hitting the book every time, in spite of Lufbery's unsteady target.

The British Major stopped the target practice. Inside we examined the book. It was a thin volume of British drill regulations. The Canadian sharpshooter gave us each a page from the book as a souvenir of the evening. The pages were perforated with five jagged holes.

When at last we rolled up the "tee" and taxied the ships into the hangars and started home, the Royal Naval Air Force declared in a body that we were the best gang of Yanks they had ever encountered.

". . . we didn't expect you blighters would be 'arf so

sociable, you know," said one of the pilots, "not 'arf."

When I got home, Bill Thaw said:

"What's the matter with your mouth, Bert?"

"My God," I said, "I hope those damned phoney teeth are all right."

"It's your lip, I suppose."

And sure enough it was my lip. I had been socked on the mouth or kicked or something; and one of my fists was all sore too. Oh, it was a jolly celebration!

CHAPTER XXIV

Diary note, September 22nd

This morning I slipped over a good one. While I was out walking I passed by the little trout stream. As I watched several of the trout I saw one of them come up to the bank and go into a hole between the rocks. This was old stuff for me. I had caught fish this way back in Missouri many times. As quick as a flash I was on my knees and quietly plunging my hands into the water. I stopped up the mouth of the hole. Half a minute later I had fingers locked into Mr. Trout's gills.

He was a beauty. Weighed about three pounds, and how he did fight! And how I did hold on! As I came through the edge of the village on the way back to the flying field, I bought a piece of silk fish line and a cheap fishing pole, so as to make the boys believe I had caught the prize in the orthodox manner.

An hour later, every boy in the outfit except Lufbery had bought himself a complete fishing outfit, expensive ones too, but they never caught a thing. An old Frenchman on the field tells me that the trout in that stream are educated trout; they will not take bait. Flies, and spinners, and artificial Junie bugs, mean nothing to them. Lufbery was the only one who didn't fall for my yarn. He went out mushroom hunting. I'll go nutty if he doesn't give up mushrooms.

Funeral at the English field today—young pilot killed during target practice. He dived at the target and when he tried to pull out he apparently couldn't. A gunner was killed at the same time.

Several of our machines have arrived. The mechanics are working sixteen hours a day putting them together. Lufbery and Kiffen Rockwell will have theirs ready tomorrow. The Royal Naval Outfit has fifty-five pilots and nearly 950 mechanics. They are a great gang. As soon as they get over today's funeral, they want to have another binge. Their C.O. suggests dinner outside with tin dishes and no fair on football rushes.

Whiskey, the lion cub, is a marvel. We are all crazy about him, especially Bill Thaw. We are going to a large bombing raid one of these days. No one knows what the objective is but the Germans already expect it. They are concentrating their air reserves in this end of the line and bombing us regularly.

Diary note, September 23rd

What a day! To begin with, two Frenchmen and two Englishmen ran into each other in the air and all four of them were bounced off. It was the ghastliest mess I ever saw in my life. Then Lufbery and Kiffen Rockwell took off for a short patrol, as soon as they had hop-tested their new ships. They were anxious of course to get into a scrap as soon as possible. Both of them have four credited victories and with another, they would go into the "ace" class.

It seems from Luf's story that he became separated from Kiffen after a bit and went off hunting on his own score. It wasn't long until Luf spied a two-placer and hopped to the attack with all he had. Before he got very far with this Boche, he found himself engaged by about five Fokkers, and what a ginning they did give the poor boy! They shot his ship so damn' full of holes that he had to land over at Fontaine and wait for

some hurry-up repairs. He has holes through his flying boots and holes through his helmet. In the meanwhile, he never knew exactly what happened to Kiffen.

We had all kinds of reports at the field. These excitable French observers called on the telephone and said Lufbery was down, out of control, and then they said two Nieuports had been seen to go down out of control and then we finally got the truth. Kiffen picked out a Fokker and dived, holding his fire like a veteran. All this was told us by a reliable Frenchman who watched the combat—an old Frenchman—one apparently without nerves.

Ultimately the Fokker and Kiffen were diving at each other full on, the Fokker firing all the time. It seemed that they could not avoid a collision. Then Kiffen opened up and held his guns in position as long as he could. But he never pulled away. The Fokker did that at the last possible moment. Kiffen went right on down. His ship came apart and he fell in a heap of tangled wreckage just about half a kilometer inside the French front lines. What I'm writing here comes to the bottom of a page and I'm damned glad of it, because I don't want to see this page again. Kiffen Rockwell was dead long before he hit the ground. An explosive bullet had hit him in the chest. The French doctors say that an ordinary bullet would have wounded him, but he might have recovered.

So Kiffen's dead and it's up to me to tell all the people Kiffen didn't like what the hell they can do.

Later in the same day

They buried the two Englishmen and the two Frenchmen and Kiffen's body has been brought back.

Lieutenant de Laage is a wreck. He was Kiffen's flying partner. He is going around saying:

"Kiffen, my dear old Kiffen, thou art no more." He of course speaks of Kiffen in the second person singular, as French people always do when they really love a person. And Captain Thénault! He came in and said, "Mes enfants, boys—gentlemen—boys—it's Kiffen. Kiffen. He's dead—*hors de combat.*" And, by God, he had tears in his voice.

Christ, it's terrible. Lufbery wants to commit suicide because he allowed Kiffen to get into trouble unaided, and I feel like a sonovabitch too because I wasn't there.

Kiffen had such a good time at the big British binge. But what the hell you goin' to do about it!

"Here's to the one who has gone before and to the next who follows on."

Diary note, September 25th

We buried Kiffen today. And from the turnout of soldiers and officers and French civilians, Kiffen Rockwell might have been the Commanding General of all the Allied armies. There were nearly 1,000 enlisted men in the procession, and music, and Père Armonier, the French Chaplain. Robert (Doc) Rockwell is all cut up. So now, Bill Thaw and Nimmie Prince and I are the only ones left out of the original seven.

. . . . . .

My machine was ready the next day and she was a beauty. The motor turned over more than any le Rhone I ever had in the air. In the afternoon, Lufbery, Lieutenant de Laage, Pavelka and I were given orders to convoy a group of bombing planes over to a German railway center where some troop movements were reported.

The bombers were all English. We gave them forty-five minutes to get their altitude and arranged to meet them over the city of Thann. But when we arrived at the city of Thann, there were no bombers in sight. So we flew over to the field at Fontaine and held a council of war. Lieutenant de Laage divided up the front into several sections and gave each of us a part. We were to patrol back and forth until we saw the Britishers and then help them all we could. I was directed to fly south in the direction of the Swiss frontier. The others took to patrolling the more northern parts. About ten minutes after I had taken the air, I saw a string of dots streaking across the sky, far to the south of my position. At first I thought they might be a Boche patrol, returning from some form of deviltry, when to my great surprise I counted them and found that their number corresponded exactly to the count of the bombers. I don't remember exactly how many there were, but they were considerably numerous, and they were making for Switzerland like hell beatin' tan bark.

At that particular moment we were between Altkirch and Ferrette. Now the only good-sized target in that neighborhood is the town of Basle. And Basle is in Switzerland.

To this very day I can remember the agonized thoughts I had as I looked across the mountains and saw the smoke from the factories of Basle. If those Britishers couldn't be stopped before they dropped their bombs, we would have Switzerland on our hip. Lafayette Escadrille would be in disgrace and the Royal Naval Air Force would possibly be court-martialed from hell to breakfast. For me, that was possibly one of the most exciting moments of the war. As soon as I caught up with the British bombers, the leader of the flight waved to me and was very much

pleased, but he kept right on going. Basle, Switzerland, in ten minutes! I fired my guns and did acrobatics to attract their attention. They wiggled their wings and waved at me. It was a jolly fine show of aerial acrobacy. I wanted to strangle everyone of them.

Finally, I flew in front of the flight leader and pointed back to Luxeuil. He nodded yes and flew on. I repeated this procedure at the risk of colliding with his machine until I was quite exasperated. I wish I could remember the things I called those fellows. And they were all friends of mine too. But they were lost, and were about to bomb Basle, Switzerland, instead of Mulhouse, Germany.

At one time I really considered the possibility of diving at the leader and colliding with him full on, or shooting him down before I should allow the unnecessary slaughter of innocent Swiss citizens. But finally something snapped. And it wasn't until we were over the edge of the city too! The tall stacks were as plainly visible as the Woolworth Tower is nowadays when I fly over Manhattan Island on a test flight.

The flight leader fired a Very pistol signal. The bombers turned around as one man and flew back to Luxeuil as fast as they could. We passed over the front between Illfurth and Ammertzwiller, and there the flight leader must have spied a target. When the signal was given, every bomber let go and what a hell of a racket they caused on the ground. The leader must have had an awfully good eye, because next day it was reported that a camouflaged supply depot had been struck and was still burning, but it was just dumb luck, as far as I could tell.

When we got back to the field, I landed first and waited for the Limeys, to see what sort of a story they would put up. Finally they came, Sopwiths, Farmans, and all.

Still I waited. Do you-all know those Limeys weren't even going to mention what had happened? When I broached the subject, one of them said:

"Oh, yes, old man, thanks awfully for putting us wise. It would have been goddamned awful to crash in those poor Switzers. They would have been writing diplomatic notes two years from now."

Another one of them thanked me and called me "Jock." I was mad then. "Jock" is a Scotch name. I wanted to sock the Limey who said it, but Nimmie Prince, who had just arrived on the scene, argued me into a good humor. Nimmie was always doing something like that.

Diary note, September 28th

The boys are still trying to catch some trout. They are beginning to be suspicious of me though, principally because I do not join in the fishing. Tonight we talked about Monsieur Ciret's restaurant at Buc. It was the Chatham of Buc. Yes, by Jove, it was more than a Chatham, because Ciret was a chef and a good one too. It would be marvelous if we could gather all the good boys together and go back to Buc and visit old man Ciret just once more. But hell, we never could gather them all up again. So many of them are finished.

News came today of James Bach. He is safe and sound in a German prison. Jim would surely get a great kick out of this life we are leading now. Too bad they had to bring him down so soon.

Also had news from Captain d'Harcourt. He has made a formal request for my services in his new outfit. It will be the N-103.

Diary note, October 10, 1916

Bad news—Whiskey has a cold! Bill Thaw is administering various kinds of medicines. Good news—Nimmie Prince has a Boche down in flames, all confirmed and posted up. There is a rumor about Armand Pinsard, the famous French pilot of the early days who has been so terribly treated in the German prisons. It seems that he has escaped (it must have actually happened in the spring of 1916). He is going back into the air again and make up for lost time. As well as I remember, he was captured in February, 1915. Lufbery knows Pinsard very well. Marc Poupre was in the same Escadrille with Pinsard—the MS-23, and of course at that time, Lufberry was Poupre's mechanic. Luf says that Pinsard is the greatest pilot in the world next to Poupre and that he is also a poet and a writer of damned fine prose.

October 11th—Diary note

Lufbery and I were out today. He and I became separated and when he got home his ship was a complete wreck. It will be junked. He also had a hole in his flying helmet. I asked him how it happened and he said:

"Bertie, it would take two Philadelphia lawyers to tell how that fight came about. All I know is that I couldn't see you and as I was quietly shooting one Heinie's tail full of lead, about forty or fifty others hopped me, and did I pull in my ears! Look at the remains of the old Nieuport and you'll know the answer to all such damned fool questions." After that speech, we went to the barracks and I mixed up some Manhattan cocktails.

Diary note, October 12th

Well, this was another whizbang of a day! The big bombing raid happened and it was some show. All the French Bréguets, and Farmans and English Sopwiths and Nieuports got off the ground at once. It was a colossal attempt and perhaps the most successful procedure so far, from a bombing point of view. But the British lost six machines, the French lost Captain Barron and we lost Nimmie Prince. At least, they tell us he can't live. So now there are only two of the original seven left—Bill Thaw and myself. Which one of us will go first! I don't think I want to know. Neither does Bill!

During the afternoon four of our men brought down a German each . . . They are Lieutenant de Laage, Diddier Masson, Lufbery and Nimmie Prince. Lufbery brought down a three-place Aviatic. . . . All this success with the results of the bombing should have given us some reason for rejoicing but on the way back darkness overtook Lufbery and Nimmie Prince. . . . Lufbery got down O.K. but Nimmie they tell us cannot live . . . It seems like a shame to have one of our boys go out in a bad landing, when he had fought through so many combats. . . . But we never know . . . And it's a damn' good thing we don't. . . .

CHAPTER XXV

The details of that bombing expedition are rather sketchy in my diary, but they are engraved on my memory —"engraved" is the word. I shall never be able to forget the proportions of the raid—the tremendous flock of bombing planes and the various patrols of protecting ships. The objective, as I must already have told you, was the Mauser Works at Oberndorf, and for the uninformed, I may say that the Mauser Works at Oberndorf was the place where the Germans manufactured rifles (Mausers), bayonets, ammunition, shell cases, machine guns, and other paraphernalia with which to carry on the big show. That's why the Allied Command was so anxious to do a little well-placed bombing in the direction of Oberndorf.

Now if you fly from Colmar, slightly north of east for ninety-five kilometers, you will come to the town of Oberndorf, and Colmar is seventy-eight kilometers as the crow flies from Luxeuil; therefore, the flight was 173 kilometers each way, provided the planes stayed on the course exactly, which everyone knew could never and would never happen. The Nieuports could not stay in the air all this time. They carried gasoline and oil enough for about two and one-half hours of flying, so it happened that the protection ships had to go part of the way and then come back for gasoline, leaving the bombers to their own devices, which included the tender mercies of the German attacking planes.

I was not in the bombing raid proper. Orders had been given me to fly to Luneville and assist a new semi-combat Escadrille in putting on a show that would attract some of

the German combat planes away from the bombers. You see, this thing had been well thought out. The new semi-combat outfit at Luneville had only been in that part of the line two days, so they needed some more experienced pilots to lead the formations and give them confidence in the thing they were doing.

It fell my lot to be one of the more experienced pilots. I flew the hop from Luxeuil to Luneville in two jumps, stopping a short while at the Corcieux Field with some orders from the headquarters at Luxeuil.

Nothing in particular happened to the semi-combat outfit I joined that day at Luneville; I mean, nothing in the way of aerial combats. We were credited with two victories. They were both two-place machines, and were brought down very easily by members of my patrol. We did, however, shoot up the troops on the ground and on the way back from our last "sortie," we finished off a Boche balloon, much to the disappointment of our friends, the Germans.

We also attracted a great many German planes and in that way we helped the cause of the bombers to no small degree. Our ground-straffing was almost as interesting as the balloon-jumping that served as a climax to the day. Once I spied a company of heavy artillerymen, moving some rather long slim guns into place. A terrific barrage of anti-aircraft and machine gun fire came from the ground, but at my signal, the patrol tipped over and each man fired at the scurrying artillerymen as long as he could without hitting the ground. We covered the countryside with bumped-off German artillerymen. The last I saw of that outfit was their horses, galloping off over the hills. Poor frightened things—I have always been glad we didn't happen to hit any of them.

Our patrol covered the line from the forest of Parroy

to the city of Blamont and back up to Rechicourt le Châteaux. It was on our last go-round that I spied some extra activity near the little village of Ignsy. I tipped over and shot a few bursts at what was moving on the ground, when all of a sudden, I realized that there was a semi-deflated observation balloon nestling on the ground, waiting to be put up for the night. What a thrill that was! We had been hedge-hopping for most of the afternoon; otherwise, I should never have had this piece of good fortune. By pulling a quick *virage* and zooming a bit, I was presently in position to do the neatest piece of execution I have ever done. Several sharp-eyed comrades of mine realized what was happening and immediately joined the sport.

On the ground the balloon crew must have been working like fiends to get their prize out of my reach, but they had started too late. I pushed over from about two hundred meters and held my fire for the last fifty meters of the dive. It was growing dark. Then I had to pull away and climb back for another attack.

If you-all think this was accomplished without resistance from the ground, you are more than mildly mistaken. As far as I could tell, every machine gun in Germany was pumping at me and some of them were quite well directed too. While I was pulling up for my climb I noticed, to my great satisfaction, that another member of the patrol, whose plane was equipped with four anti-balloon sky-rockets, had followed me down and was doing exactly as I had done, while the remainder of the outfit was flying up and down protecting us from an aerial attack while we weren't looking.

When I had climbed up to what I considered a proper height for my second dive, I tilted my plane over so as to look at the ground a second before diving. It all hap-

pened just as I tilted over. The season of the year and the lateness of the day had no doubt made the outer skin of the balloon a little moist and it took the sky-rockets and the bullets longer to do their work. One of the French pilots afterwards said that he thought the balloon actually caught fire from something we had ignited on the ground beside the gas condensers. This might have been possible, for the second I tipped over I saw that our job was done, and very well done too.

The ground crew was scurrying away from the hideous heat of the burning gases. There was a bright glow of flame and then a long column of beautifully tinted fire shot upward. The inside of the column was blueish, much like the flame of a Bunsen burner. About that time, something happened on the ground. It must have been the explosion of the reserve gas tanks. We didn't stay around very long after that, and how those German anti-aircraft gunners did wave us good-bye with about half a million dollars' worth of good shells, every one of which missed by a safe margin. I didn't put in for a confirmation; I let the French pilots do that. They hadn't been at the front long and they needed the score; I had enough scores already.

Of course, you are not interested in my part of this particular day's flying. What you want to know is, how did the bombers come out, and what happened to Nimmie Prince. Well, here's the story: Lieutenant de Laage, Diddier Masson, Raoul Lufbery and Norman Prince were detailed to protect the bombers through the most important part of the raid. Each one of the aforementioned pilots brought down a German attacking plane. When the bombers arrived at Oberndorf, they let go tons of explosives and the smash-up on the ground was simply marvelous. Our Intelligence Department told us later

that we really had done some effective work in slowing down the production of German munitions of war.

Diddier Masson had a strange experience. On the way back he said he saw a German Fokker come in between him and one of the English bombers. Masson swung around and started firing. It was a perfect target.

". . . and do you know," said Diddier, "that Boche plane simply flopped over and went down on fire. It was the easiest piece of flying I ever did in my life—pull around, aim in pretty much of a hurry, fire, and then go on home. It was too easy!"

Lufbery brought down a three-place Aviatic. Prince had a single-placer out of control and de Laage had the same luck. But darkness overtook them. The bombers landed without much difficulty because their landing and taking-off speed was very low. Prince and Lufbery got off the line of flight a bit and found that they would have to land at the Corcieux Flying Field, as the darkness was growing thicker all the while and their gasoline supply was nearly exhausted.

Lufbery made his landing O.K.—he was naturally lucky—but Nimmie Prince didn't judge the height of the trees, and then there were some high tension electric wires. Nimmie's undercarriage hit the wires and nosed down into the ground. At first, he appeared to have a pair of broken legs. He wouldn't even let the field personnel help him. He wanted everyone to get busy lighting flares lest some other pilot would crash and come to the same fate as he had come to.

They rushed him to the hospital at Gerardmer. Next day a blood clot formed in the base of his brain and presently he was dead. The man who had conceived the idea of the Lafayette Escadrille was finished off! And a bad landing is what caught him.

So, we buried Nimmie Prince, the most loved and the most respected man in the Lafayette Escadrille. All the honors that could be given a soldier were his. Just before he died, he was advanced in rank and given the Legion of Honor, a decoration which can only be worn by officers.

We had a group picture taken during the afternoon of the funeral, and that night Lufbery and Thaw and I sat a long while and talked over the past. Lufbery didn't have much to say; he kept continually humming the tune of "Frankie and Johnnie." He later sang one of the three verses he knew.

Oh, lay me away in that graveyard, and toll that church-house bell,
Lay me where the northeast wind blows, from the southeast corner of hell.
I shot my man, but he done me wrong.

THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN SHORTLY AFTER THE DEATH OF NORMAN PRINCE

Seated, from left to right: Adjutant Bert Hall, Lieut. de Lange, Capt. Thenault, Lieut. Bill Thaw, Father Armonier, Sergeant Johnson.

Standing, left to right: Rumsey, Pavelka, Marshall, Masson, Hill, Bob Rockwell.

CHAPTER XXVI

The principal reason for our stay at Luxeuil was to assist in the Oberndorf bombing raid, so as soon as that was accomplished and we had given poor old Nimmie Prince a respectable burial, we took off for le Bourget, where we were to pick up new planes and fly away to the north end of the line. Our new post was said to be at the village of Cachy. No one had the slightest idea where Cachy was, and considering the state of the weather and our recent poor luck, no one gave much of a damn either.

The Royal Naval Air Force and all the French pilots in the neighborhood of Luxeuil turned out at the railway station when we took off for Paris. There were lots of good wishes and much shaking of hands. There was a British Major (the Flight Commander) with the Royal Naval outfit, who surely made a hit with us. He had been decorated with everything the British had for his services down in Gallipoli. And according to his story, that Gallipoli war was the damnedest thing ever invented. It seems that our British Major had flown down and landed in what one would call No Man's Land and picked up a wounded English soldier, put him in the rear cockpit and had then flown away, all this having been accomplished in an absolute hail of bullets. The Major was there the morning of our departure. As the train pulled out I saw him standing at attention, saluting us en masse, or rather, saluting the idea of the Lafayette Escadrille.

That was October 18, 1916.

Diary note, October 20th (le Bourget)

Hot news about the new Spads. They tell us that we shall have them very soon. Captain d'Harcourt tells me that the orders for my transfer from N-124 to N-103 are on the way. Went to the Opera Comique last night—saw Massenet's "Manon." There were wounded soldiers everywhere, some with eyes out; others with crutches or arms off. They seemed to enjoy the music. One of the singers in the Opera had an arm off. A Frenchman near me told me the actor's name, but I have forgotten it. He was an artilleryman. He sang the part of Manon's brother. Bill Thaw is talking about going back to the States for Christmas. We have taken in three recruits—Fred Prince, Willis Haviland and Bob Soubrain.

Saw Guynemer today. He is also at Cachy in N-3. He says they have a shower bath at Cachy. I told him about the baths at Luxeuil, the ones built and used by Cæsar's men so many years ago. Guynemer explained the Cachy baths, or rather bath. It is a little wooden affair, closed in on three sides, no top, and a barrel up in a tree with a rubber hose running down the spray nozzle. I thought Georges would die laughing as he was telling me about it. He is going to have a Spad in three days. The Deperdussin people have promised it. Guynemer is a great pilot.

Diary note, October 19, 1916 (Cachy, Somme)

What a hell of a hole this is! The Lafayette Escadrille is at last living in army barracks. Some of our good boys have been putting up in hotels and châteaux ever since they came with us; now they are finding out what the war is. The Germans know exactly where we

are; they come over and bomb us with the most remarkable accuracy you ever saw. N-124 has no cooking equipment. Sampson, the Chef, is in a hell of a stew, and we are eating around with the other squadrons. It will save us money on our popote, that is, as long as we can sponge meals.

Later in the same day

My new Nieuport functioned beautifully all the way up here, and incidentally, I flew over a lot of soldiers and a lot of military preparations. Commandant Féquant is in charge of our combat group. There are five escadrilles on the field, N-103, N-65, N-68, N-124, and N-3. N-3 is Guynemer's outfit; it is under the command of Captain Brocard. There is a rumor that Brocard will be retired from active duty at the front and sent back to Paris to help run things generally.

Diary note, October 21, 1916 (Cachy)

Met some English pilots over at Villers Bretonneux last night. They are a great body of troops. One of them told me that they were flying a de Haviland pusher with a Gnome motor in it and it's a single-seater, but best of all, it's supposed to be a combat ship. Sounds too much like fiction, but the boy was sober and seemed to know what he was talking about. The English are losing pilots though—more than we are.

Thaw is going to Paris tomorrow to bring back some cooking equipment. We will have our own mess. The other outfits are growing weary of feeding us.

Diary note, October 23rd (Cachy)

Well, Bill Thaw has been to Paris. He took a camion and brought back everything in the shop.

We've got so bloody many cooking utensils that Sampson hasn't got room to cook anything. Now we'll have to throw some of 'em away. But Sampson is happy; he can cook to his heart's content. Visited the boys over at N-3 last night. Guynemer is up at le Bourget getting his Spad. Captain Brocard thinks the Spad will not be ready for another month. Herteaux, one of the famous members of the Cigognes (N-3), was originally in Morane-Saunier-23 with Garros, Eugene Gilbert, Marc Poupre, Pinsard, and the other early birds. I wish I could remember some of the stories Herteaux tells about those days. If only there was a writer handy to get this material! But then, no one would believe it. They'd rather have aviation stories written in Chicago—that's the way of the public.

Herteaux brought down a German once with one bullet. But he never talks about himself. They call René Dorme "the unpuncturable." They actually believe that no one will ever shoot him down.

Diary note, October 25th (Cachy)

Guynemer is back without the Spad. Flying is a washout; the clouds are right down on the ground. Visited some English boys over at Dury. They have an excellent mess, with wonderful jam, and tea every afternoon. Great troops, those Limies and damned good pilots too. But they are losing men—more than we are.

Diary note, October 29th (Cachy)

Had orders to transfer from the Lafayette Escadrille to N-103 today. Moved with as little excitement as possible. I hate good-byes. Am going to le Bourget tomorrow to get a Spad. Guynemer has his,

and there is another one out somewhere. Mine will be the third one turned over to the Government. The reports from them are very discouraging—everything seems to be wrong. I have confidence in them though, and I believe that with a little tinkering and some practical engineering, they will work. The tests have been wonderful; that is, tests at the fields near the factory, not at the front. That makes a great difference.

Here ends my connection with the Lafayette. Captain d'Harcourt made quite a lot of my coming into N-103. They had a little party—extra food and all that. I think the Lafayette Escadrille is glad to get rid of me. I don't blame 'em.

INSIGNIA OF FRENCH SQUADRON TO WHICH LIEUTENANT BERT HALL WAS TRANSFERRED

PART IV

CHAPTER XXVII

Diary note, November 10th

Well, I finally got that damned Spad home, or rather got it within a quarter of a mile of home and then I gave it up as a bad job and walked the rest of the way. I've lived in France now nearly ten years, but in the last five days I surely have encountered some French towns I never knew existed before. My Spad has been a kind of education to me. It let me down seven times, not including two false starts back at le Bourget. In spite of all this, I believe that the machine is a triumph. If the "bugs" can be detected and overcome it will give us the mastery of the air in six months, provided the Boche do not come out with something altogether advanced over what they are building now.

My first stop was at Mareil-en-France not far from the Chantilly highroad. The air pressure on the gasoline would not stay up, and I got bloody well tired of pumping, so I landed in a little field. It was the first emergency landing I had made with a Spad and it taught me things. The Spad lands at high speed. It is a heavy ship with a very small wing spread; therefore, the speed. This model has a 140-horsepower Hispano-Suiza motor.

From Mareil-en-France I got as far as Apremont. Fortunately, the air pressure went out when there was a landing field below me. (Any of you who have flown over the country north of Paris, know that there are great stretches of forests, and a Spad landing in a forest would about finish the pilot, to say nothing of the Spad.)

There were other stops; one at Fitz-James on account

of a hot motor; one at St. Remy-en-l'Eau—magneto trouble; one at Fort Phillippe on account of just plain cussedness and one at Serevillers for unknown reasons. At each of these stops I had to do a lot of tinkering and then get some soldiers or aged civilians (mostly farmers) to hold the blooming thing while I twisted the prop and started the engine again. From Serevillers to a point just over the Amiens-Roye highroad, the thing seemed to be going for good, when all of a sudden, she knocked out and I let her sit out in the open and walked on into camp.

They began to twit me about the "permission" I had been spending in "gay Paree," but I soon put an end to that form of enjoyment. Captain d'Harcourt in his great wisdom realized what I was up against and as long as he understands, I don't give a damn what these other half-wits think.

Diary note, November 12th

No one knows who got the first Spad, but Guynemer got the second one and I seem to have the third. Guynemer calls it his "new taxi." I haven't thought of a name that would look good in print so far. Leon and I have been making the bloody thing over for the last two days. We finally got the gasoline pressure to stay up; now it's a matter of finding out how to keep the motor from going cold at high altitudes. Leon came to me today and illustrated something with his hands that would help the temperature of the engine when it's zero all around, but I dismissed him. Christ, but I am anxious to get the ship to working. Today I had a letter from the Deperdussin people in Paris. They invited me to call at their offices when I get to Paris next time. They seemed to be pleased that I got their Spad safely up to Cashy.

Diary note, November 15th (Cachy)

A system of shutters, manually operated, has solved the problem of keeping the engine warm at high altitudes, and the oil and gasoline pressure is all O.K. Guynemer is in the air every day now with his Spad; that is, he gets up as high as the clouds and fog will permit him. I'm sticking to tinkering for a little longer. My machine gun is attached and the sights are adjusted. The Lafayette is getting on beautifully. Jimmy McConnell will not be back from the hospital until next spring. Saw Lieutenant de Laage a little while this afternoon. He had a forced landing yesterday and had to spend the night with a farming outfit in the remains of a shell-swept cottage. He said, "Bert, the good old days of *la panne de château* are over."

Diary note, November 16th (Cachy)

The war up here is more serious than it was down in the south end of the line. Our Combat Group is numbered 13 and is referred to in Army Orders as Groupe-Féquant—this, of course, in honor of the Commanding Officer, Philippe Féquant.

Diary note, November 19th (Cachy)

At last my taxi (as Guynemer calls it) will work. I went up to 4,000 meters today, dived until I got dizzy, and pulled out without the least sense of fear. The wings stayed on; they didn't even wiggle. Tomorrow I shall try for a combat. There are quite a few Spads on the field now. All the improvements we made have been copied studiously by engineers from the factory. They were kidding me about having the third Spad though. They passed out that story perhaps to make me feel important.

Diary note, November 20th

The fog is down on the ground. Flying is washed out. Luf and I went over to Villers-Bretoneaux and met some Limey pilots. They are youngish fellows. They thought Luf was swell.

. . . . . .

Just got back from Paris. Captain d'Harcourt said I might take a day off and accept the hospitality of the Deperdussin people. They were surely nice to me. They indicated an engineer who took me everywhere, paid for everything—even to the opera, "Madame Butterfly"—the one where they play a trumped-up version of the Star Spangled Banner. Never did I have such a good time. The second night we went to the Folies Bergère. They were doing the dance of the Ceinture Chasteté. It is making a great hit. The Deperdussin people seemed to be very much obligated to me for making my taxi work at all. I believe they were surprised. I am too, more or less.

Diary note, November 23rd (Cachy)

Today I paid for my keep. At 3,000 meters, I spied two Boche combat planes. A comrade who was with me took on one of them and I took on the other. Two minutes later, one of them was down out of control and the other was hotfootin' it back to Germany with my comrade on his trail. The Spad is a success. It is not a ship for maneuvering, but it is a speedy ship and one that is perfect in a dive. I believe they will sooner or later put stronger motors in them, perhaps as much as 200-horsepower.

Today's fight happened just over the town of Rancourt, on the Perrone-Bapaume highway. The Boche were both flying Fokkers and I believe that the appear-

ance of my ship put the fear of God in their hearts. I didn't succeed at the first dive, but in a few maneuvers I had my sights full on the back of my antagonist's neck. It was easy from then on. I followed the Boche down until I saw him crack up and then turned my attention to my comrade. He was out of sight by that time, so I emptied my ammunition at some overly active spots on the ground and came home to report the good news. Captain d'Harcourt said, "Vive le Spad!" I said, "Vive Bert Hall!", but the Captain didn't hear me.

Diary note, December 1st (Cachy)

Just good old French winter weather, fog on the ground, flying a washout.

Diary note, December 5th

Lafayette boys all talking about going home for Christmas. I think it's a lot of hot air. I slipped and fell in a wet place on the field this A.M. and Lufbery called me "old mud in the eye." Luf is going on leave to Bourges. That woman of his must have some magnetism.

Diary note, December 11th (Cachy)

A lad named Ronald Hoskier joined the Lafayette Escadrille today. He is a "handsome dog" type of boy and they say he is a hell of a good pilot. Bill Thaw still sticks to his story about going to America for Christmas. I told him he'd better hurry. It's only fourteen days now.

Diary note, December 14th (Cachy)

Fortunately, I do not know the men in N-103 very well. If I did, I should be heart-broken over our losses in the past month. We should normally have about twelve pilots. At the rate we are going now, twenty men

will have gone through the Escadrille in thirty days. Most of them have been casualties in combat, a few from sickness and a few from accidents in the new Spads. I have orders to report to the under secretary of War in Paris on the morning of December 16th. I don't know what the hell I've done now. Captain d'Harcourt says he thinks it's a special mission of some kind and not because of some misdemeanor. I've been trying to remember all the things I've done in the last six months, but somehow I can't seem to remember why I should be called up on the carpet.

Diary note, December 17th, Paris

Listen, my children, and you shall hear of how an American from Bowling Green, Kentucky, went to Russia on a diplomatic aviation mission, with money in his pockets and passports besides. The War Office had me up on the carpet for hours, not giving me hell, but rather telling me what good work I had done and then telling me how to act in Russia. I am supposed to help the Russians pep up their flying and also report back to Paris what is going on. I start *muy pronto*.

Diary note, December 18th, Paris

They gave me ten typewritten sheets of instructions today. I'm supposed to memorize every word on the ten sheets. Saw two boys who are heading for the Lafayette —Kenneth Marr and Harold Willis. They have about finished training, and are about to go to Cazeaux for gunnery instruction before reporting to the Escadrille. We talked over old times and visited Jimmy McConnell. He's not making much speed towards getting well.

Diary note, December 19th, Paris

The people over at the War Office are wising me up on Russia. A German general named von Mackensen has just won a whale of a battle against the Russian and the Roumanian armies in what is known as the Prohova Valley. I don't believe there is a German general named von Mackensen. Without the "von," it sounds like a Scotch name—a bit trumped up, I'd say. The Roumanians have changed their headquarters from Bucharest to Jassy and a fellow named David Lloyd George is now the Premier of England. This thing of making a diplomat out of me has very little promise. I'm a soldier and have practically no confidence in diplomacy as a device to bring about peace.

I've studied the maps of Russia until I'm dizzy. The whole country is one grand collection of consonants as far as I can tell. But I once knew a girl in Russia and that may help! Her name was Tina Borokeff. The name is misleading; it sounds as if she would be small. Tina! Her father owned a hotel in St. Petersburg. That will help when I travel through that part of the world. Tina promised me swell attention once upon a time.

M. Aristide Briand is heading a new French Cabinet these days and General Nivelle is the new C.O. of all the French Armies. He is not overly popular with the soldiers, I know, but that's not for publication; I mean, the General.

Later

My diary will have to end in England. No form of written records shall be taken on the Russian jaunt. Somehow, I don't believe the War Office expects me to come back from this blooming mission. I might keep a

record in a code. I'll try to work out a dot and dash method of writing. It would give me a chance to do something headquarters didn't want me to do.

Diary note, December 20th, Paris

I'm becoming diplomatically minded. I think in terms of ukases and ultimatums. It's awful! When one is a soldier, all one thinks of is food, the enemy, and one's lady friends. As a diplomat, one is supposed to think only of the enemy; at least, that's what they tell me at the War Office. It doesn't seem to be practical though. I doubt their tale about how the diplomats conduct themselves, even the lesser ones like myself. I've seen them in action and then I wasn't born on Sunday. Saw Lufbery yesterday. He was on his way to Bourges. I talked to him like a father, but he thumbed his nose with both thumbs at once and told me to climb the Tour d'Eiffel and stay there. I gave him ten centimes for luck and he gave me ten centimes for luck. Christ knows I'll need it on this trip. He said Thaw is on his way to the States—lucky devil!

Diary note, December 21st

Who should I see today but the Duchess. She's really Lady M., and somebody in London. Without telling her anything worth while, I remarked that I might be in London soon. She took the hint and invited me to what she calls "the studio." It seems to be a place where folks of artistic inclinations gather for other purposes than art; that is, they don't let art interfere with a good time. She says that there are quite a few Americans—army people—among her guests, and mobs of British pilots. I shall visit the dear Duchess. It will be my first test as

a diplomat. I will then know that I can be a special diplomatic messenger and refrain from falling for the wiles of the female. Lloyd George has just declined a so-called peace proposal from the Germans. From now on, the Germans will say that the Allies prolonged the war. Sounds exactly like German reasoning, damn 'em!

Diary note, December 22nd

Today they gave me a diplomatic passport which said that I was a native-born Frenchman. Besides this, I also have my own passport; that is, an American one. Saw Captain Brocard today. He has been retired from active duty with N-3 since the early part of this month. Captain Albert Heurteaux took his place. N-3 has had great success under Brocard's direction.

The newspapers are full of the story of the marriage of Mlle. de L. She is the charmer who came down to the railway station and bade me such a tender, touching, affectionate farewell when I first went away to fight the war with the Foreign Legion in 1914. Now she is married to a most important person. Glory go with her! I sent her my congratulations by the *pneumatique* this A.M. I've always been convinced that she is the best-looking female person in Paris, France. And when one qualifies in Paris, the outside competition means nothing; or even less than nothing.

Diary note, December 23rd

The French have made a great capture at Verdun. Visited Jimmy McConnell. He is writing a book on the sly. He said, "What do you write in your diary?" I said, "Nothing but foolishness, stories about the ladies, and such rot!" He said at that rate I should soon have

an encyclopædia. Said it should be called "le dictionaire d'amour." Still studying Russia.

Diary note, December 24th, Paris, France, and en route to London

Mata-Hari is not in town. I have news of her and it is that she is in Spain and that she is also in bad. They have the low-down on her now. It would seem that Miss Mata-Hari will no doubt have to walk the plank, and if she's guilty, by God, she deserves it. A mannequin friend of mine told me this interesting news. These god-damned dressmakers know more about what's happening to the Government than a lot of officials.

Later at le Havre and then on the Channel

The officials treated me as if I were a German trying to get through Verdun. They did everything but put the Bertillon convict measurement system on me. Finally, they covered my orders with a new bunch of rubber stamps and let me go. Christmas Eve on the British Channel and not a light on board. Good old boiled potatoes for dinner tonight! I don't see how the British get on with the food they eat. The jam was excellent, though. It redeems the entire procedure of eating.

Diary note, London Town, December 25, 1916

John Baillie and Co., Ltd., are making me a suit of clothes *muy pronto*. I will leave this place *en civil* and Christ help me if anyone finds out that I am an officer in the French Army. I'll be bumped off so quick that I'll never know what happened. The British Foreign Office are suspicious already, so I'm going to tell those beef-eaters the truth and show them that I am an American citizen. That might keep the trigger finger quiet a

little while; at least, until I get out of the blooming country. It's Christmas-time everywhere. Jesus, I wish I was back with the Escadrille! This diplomatic mission racket gives me a pain. Every time I pass a policeman on the street I expect him to clamp down on me and say, "Look here, you're not what you seem to be; you're something else. Come with me! I have a special jail-house for the likes o' you!" Wham! goes the jail house door! It's terrible!

Diary note, December 26th, London

Went out to St. John's Woods to visit the "dear Duchess." And the studio turned out to be the real thing. Her ladyship was radiant and she put me forward as if I had won the war all by myself. I felt like an ass and said so. That statement seemed to make an awful hit. I discovered that the British like a person who appears to have an inferiority complex. During the evening some youngsters came in and sang Christmas Carols. They were dressed up in medieval costumes. Their singing was simply superb. If I was a musician, I'd sing Christmas Carols, by God, and give up this operatic bunk.

I don't know whether I'm growing old or getting sentimental or becoming feeble-minded or lonesome, or all four at once, but I take my hat off to those carol singers. When they sang, something was going on. It was very calm and smooth and beautiful. The voices all sounded like one. Christ! I can't describe it but it did things to me.

Later, a young officer in the British Artillery played piano. He'd lost a leg out in Gallipoli. How he did stroke that box! He played a tune I recognized as "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles," but they told me the bubble

song was a steal; the original music was written by a Pole named Chopin. That's what I get for being a Kentucky Hillbilly. I told the young artilleryman about the Flying Major we had had with us down at Luxeuil—the one who had been in charge of the Royal Naval outfit—and everybody knew that Major. He bats pretty high with the folks on the British Isles.

Every woman at the party except two had lost men folks at the front, but the war was not mentioned. I'm damned if I ever saw an outfit like the British. They are a great body of troops.

Diary note, December 27th

British Foreign Office all day.

Diary note, December 28th

British Foreign Office all day. Looks like the jailhouse for me.

Diary note, December 29th

British Foreign Office thinks I'm O.K., with reservations. I believe someone is watching me everywhere I go. The Savoy Bar is the un-official Aviation Headquarters. Men from every corner of the world stand up to that trough. I've met lots of friends there.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Diary note, January 4th, London

Imagine my surprise—in the Savoy Bar—three members of the Lafayette Escadrille, on their way back to the front. They have been to America for Christmas. I *would* find them in the Savoy Bar. What a reunion we did have—all the low-down on the Escadrille—all the late dope on the situation back in the States. They say that the States will be in the war before next summer and they have good information from Washington.

My new suit of civies is finished. It fits like a parachute and makes me look like a British Squire on a bank holiday. I leave tomorrow. Went out to the St. John's Woods for a farewell studio party. Took my Buddies with me. The party turned wild. I left with my gang about four A.M. We had the only taxicab in London. They dropped me at the Piccadilly and then went to their places. All my stuff is packed and I have figured out a code for the Russian diary.

Diary note, January 5th

Those low-down bums! Those Lafayette Escadrille pilots! They rode all over London in that goddamned taxicab and then sent it back to the Piccadilly to collect from me. It cost me two pounds sterling and I am sore!

Later

Left London at sundown. The dear Duchess came to the station to see me off. There were several suspicious-

looking people there looking on—operators from the British Intelligence Department, I think. The Lafayette boys were there too. They didn't know a thing about the taxicab. Had there been a taxi! What did it cost! Would I let them send me a cheque! Bunk!

I'm going to mail this part of my diary and any other papers that seem to be "super cargo" back to the dear Duchess from New Castle where I get my boat for Bergen.

So, as far as this part of my diary is concerned, c'est finis.

Decoded diary, January 7, 1917. At Sea. (North)

(This part of my diary is rather obscure. At times I have tried to decode as accurately as possible, but there are mistakes, I'm quite sure.)

Came aboard afternoon, January 6th. Steamer name *Jupiter*. Register Norway. Met Italian Countess going to visit relatives in Persia. Very charming Countess—old friend of mine, etc., etc.

Diary note, January 8th

Stopped by German submarine just before dusk. It was a very disappointing performance. I expected to see the U-Boat people sweep the decks with machine-gun fire; instead, they pulled alongside and we stopped as if we were the oldest of friends. The German Commander came aboard and looked us over very carefully. I wanted to murder him in his own blood, but had to be polite. He spoke perfect English. Everyone was on deck except an Italian who was a diplomatic courier. The Germans searched the mail, took what they thought would be interesting and waved us good-bye.

Later

The Italian courier was hiding in the coal bunkers and he had his mail hidden in the coal bunkers with him. I asked him what he would do if the fireman would heave his mail pouch in the furnaces. He said, "Well, I'd rather have it in hell than in Germany." Bitter cold tonight.

Diary note, January 9th

Landed at Bergen. Gave my friend, the Italian courier, some letters for friends in Lafayette; also, letters for America. Had trouble at passport headquarters. Proceeded to Christiania, then to Stockholm; then to Haparanda. Met German officers at Stockholm. Italian Countess speaks the Bohunk language and saves me a lot of trouble. She is also very charming.

Note on German Officers

I remember well how those squareheads thought they were taking me in. They both spoke excellent English and asked me endless questions. I told them I represented an American contracting firm and was selling supplies to the Russian Imperial Government. They became interested at once and wanted to arrange for the purchase of as many tons of oils, greases, copper, brass, etc., as I was willing to sell. They said I might ship it by way of Sweden.

"We do quite a lot of buying in the United States," they said. "All such supplies are shipped via Sweden. Sweden is our friend."

They also explained that the Germans would win the war because of their superiority in artillery and aviation. I thought of my score of aerial victories and said "Yes," but all the while I wanted to strangle them.

Diary note, January 11th

Haparanda is the end of the railroad. Took a sled from there to Torneo. Seems as if I'm going a long ways to fight.

Diary note, Swedish Russian Frontier, January 12th

The Russians were on the point of sending me back to where I came from, but finally they decided to let me into the country. My passport is so full of stamps that it can hardly be read. Russian trains on this railroad burn wood. Every now and then we have to stop and chip the ice off the locomotive and wait until the steam is up high enough to run. Food is fair—fish cakes, black bread, tea, potatoes.

Diary note, Petrograd, Russia, January 14, 1917

The Italian Countess went on her way, south in the direction of Moscow. I bade her an affectionate good-bye. The city is still in mourning for Rasputin. They bounced him off a short while ago. I am staying at the Hotel de France; it is in the Nevsky Prospekt. Have decided to give up the idea of doing my diary in code. Russia is so full of German spies that a little unimportant document like my diary would never cause any trouble, even though the Foreign Office at Paris told me not to keep any written records of my operations.

Diary note, Petrograd, Russia, January 15th

My room costs ten rubles per day, or $3.33. There are no baths, as baths are distinctly unpopular in Russia; they use eau-de-cologne instead. The waiter who served me here at the hotel the first day of my stay could not speak French and I spoke very indifferent Russian. Finally, he asked me if I spoke German. I said I did

and then he went to it. I never heard such fluent German in my life. I am sure he must have been a *kellner* at the Winter Garden in Berlin before the war, and is now a distinguished member of the Kaiser's Secret Diplomatic Corps. He began asking me such a flood of questions I almost lost my appetite and that's something strange for me.

I have discovered that Rasputin's name was not really Rasputin at all, but Gregory Novikh. He came originally from Tobolsk and until he appeared at Petrograd, he was just an ordinary "Mujik." Some folks say that Rasputin's death is a damned good thing for Russia, while others do not believe he ever existed. A Russian officer friend of mine told me how he was bounced off. It is the most highly accepted version of the deed.

Prince Felix Youssopoff, the Grand Duke Dmitry Pavlovich, and Baron Purishkench invited Gregory Rasputin to a dinner party at the Youssopoff Palace. (My spelling is as near as I can get to these impossible Russian names.) The three young officers promised Rasputin that there would be an excellent dinner, fine wines and fair ladies. During the evening after the wine got to working, Rasputin boasted that he was running and ruining the Russian Government. The three young officers decided that this was their signal so they went into action. When they got through with Rasputin, his body looked like a sponge. Later, the body was weighted and dropped into the river, but was recovered by the police and buried in the gardens of the Tsarskoe Selo Palace.

It seems that Rasputin had a female nurse and a man detective from London with him always, but on the fatal night the bodyguard was missing. My informant further told me that Rasputin could cure the little Tsarevich whenever he suffered from a spell of nose-bleed. There-

fore, Rasputin ran the Government. I don't understand it. The Russians are a rare lot.

According to the current talk, if the Russian Imperial Government fails, it will be largely Rasputin's fault. He was completely pro-German. He has rather a bad record with the ladies too. They say that no woman in Russia from the age of ten to eighty-five was safe from his amorous advances. From his pictures, I don't see how he ever got away with it; he looks like a scarecrow to me.

I leave with my Spad tomorrow and I am almost broke; they have cleaned me out. I send my reports back to Paris by three different couriers. This is done to be sure that one arrives. I have looked up Tina Borokeff, the Russian girl who promised me such swell attention whenever I came to Russia. The address of her father's hotel was a livery barn. She must have some sense of humor.

Diary note, January 17th. Polotsk, Russia

I can't tell yet whether the Russians know that the war is going on or not. Everything is in the worst disorganized mess you could ever imagine. Flying is hazardous too because the soldiers shoot at you from the ground, not knowing a friend from an enemy. The Dvina River runs along beside the railroad from Polotsk to Dunaburg. I expect to fly over there tomorrow. Heard today that the Russian Premier Trepoff has resigned. A man named Golitzin has taken his place.

Diary note, January 18th. Dunaburg, Russia

The condition in the Russian army is appalling—no other word will express it. There are eighty holidays in Russia and it seems to be "no fair" to fight on holidays.

I never saw anything like it in my life. An artilleryman told me yesterday that his outfit has been waiting for four months for the right kind of ammunition. He said that his battery had been supplied some American-made shells, but they were a fraction of an inch too large. They were nice highly polished shells, but now they are rusting away out on the banks of Dvina River. What a hell of an army! Food poor. Tobacco impossible.

Diary note, January 20th. Menelkof, 150 miles south-east of Riga

At last I have seen the Russian Air Force in action. They are a washout. They fly about six hours per month and rest the remainder of the time. They have excellent equipment but no organization, no direction. They think I am either a patriot, a saint, or a fool. The German machines come over whenever they want to and stay as long as they wish. Today I picked up a German, flying an old-fashioned, two-place ship at about 500 meters. I suppose he must have thought I was a Russian; at least, he paid no attention to me whatever, so I just got under the Boche's tail and shot him full of holes. He came down on fire and there was great excitement back at the flying field. When I landed, everyone on the field gave me hell. They said that they had been here a long while and the Germans had never bothered them. After what happened today, the Boche will get mad and come over on bombing raids and perhaps kill someone. Socially, the Russian aviator is hot stuff, but a squadron of them wouldn't last fifteen minutes on the French front. Am leaving tomorrow in the direction of Vilna.

Diary note, Moshevkef. Jan. 21st. Dud weather!

Diary note Jan. 23rd. (A few miles from the front.)

Today I discovered that I have been recommended by the General commanding this army corps for the highest decoration they can give an officer. It is the Cross of St. George. I am to go up to St. Petersburg to get it from the Tsar in person. What a story this will make for the boys of the Lafayette if I ever see them again.

Poker and a game called "66" is the usual order of the day. Food is good but the army is a riot. There is much talk of overthrowing the Tsar. No one makes stump speeches about it, but it's in the air just the same. Last night I ran against someone on the street; it was pitch dark. The person I encountered was very much bothered. He said something rather insulting in German and I thought it was time to go into action, so I squared around for a good scrap. I said, "Come on, you Schweinhund, and take your medicine!" talking to him in German all the while. He disappeared off into the darkness. Russia is so full of German spies that the country is completely overrun. The German spy system will lick Russia yet.

Diary note, North-Russian Aviation Base, Jan. 26th.
East of Brest, Litovsk

I hope my messages back to France have some value. Christ knows I am writing everything I can think of. Had letters from the Lafayette today. They are making the war as usual and expect to move soon.

Diary note, Jan. 27th

The Grand Duke A. visited the base today. I was presented to him. He asked me questions for about two hours. During this time we had dinner and it was the

first high-class food I have had since I came to this bloody country. The old rule holds good everywhere. If you want to get on in style, hobnob with the upper classes. A. is about fifty years of age and is the chief in charge of Russian Aviation. He speaks French like a native.

The Grand Duke A. is the only man I have met so far in Russia who seems to understand that four years of major warfare require a social adjustment behind the lines. He said that if Russia came out of the war and withstood the Revolution (which all the nobles seem to expect after the war is over), it would be because the Tsar and his ministers saw fit to bring about some reforms, regulated the prices of humble necessities and made sure that the under-classes were not only fed, but treated like human beings. I thought this was quite a speech to come from a Russian Grand Duke.

Diary note, Feb. 1st

Yesterday, I talked with a group of young officers. They told me that they would be just as happy under German *Kultur* as they are now. I didn't know whether to scream or go blind. I said, "Why are you in the war?" They said, "Ask M. Strumer, the Premier, or M. Protopopoff, the Minister of the Interior; or Rasputin's ghost. Perhaps the Tsarina might know." After all, I am convinced that much of Russia is a legend and that the average Russian is happiest when he is treating himself and his country as a kind of myth. It's all very hard for me to understand.

Some of them have told me that they went into the war gladly, hoping that a German defeat would end the influence of German intrigue at the Russian Court in Petrograd. The Russians would then be more closely

allied with democratic forms of government—France and England. But now they have been betrayed and have lost all interest in winning.

February 10th, Kieff. Headquarters for the Russian General Staff

There is great activity at Kieff, or Kiev, as they spell it in Russian. The flying field is on the near side of the Dnieper off in the direction of Vasilkov. This afternoon I was presented to Grand Duke Nicholas. He is a remarkable looking man and I can easily understand that his men worship him. Although the Tsarina had him removed from the position of Commander-in-Chief, he is the real head of everything and if he were Tsar, things would be different. Like all the others, he seemed to think I knew a little bit about everything. He asked me questions until I nearly became tongue-tied. He is very anxious to have the Russian aviation section pulled together. I made some suggestions and he sadly said that I was perhaps young and expected to conquer Rome in a day. He understands Russia all right.

Diary note. February 12th. Kieff. Headquarters

Received the Russian St. Vladimir Medal today from the Grand Duke Nicholas. The ceremony nearly knocked my eye out. These Russians do things up right, even when they are starving. Will visit the Tsarina's Red Cross train tomorrow.

Diary note, Feb. 13th. Kieff. Hdqtrs.

If Lufbery could only have been with me, and Bill Thaw and all the old gang! What a story I will have to tell them if I ever get back! That Red Cross train of

the Tsarina's—there was never anything like it. It's just like the Taj Mahal. And they tell me that a wounded man has never come within miles of it. But those nurses! Every one of them is some titled Princess or Duchess or other. And the food they put out and the entertainment and the swell attention! Well, all I've got to say is that when that Lafayette Escadrille gang goes to telling me about the châteaux they've been visiting and the others get through with their tales about the titled English heiresses, I shall have my Tsarina's Red Cross train episode all ready to spring and then I'll sit back and watch 'em go over.

Ever since I've been in Russia, people have been telling me that there were two reasons why the Germans have been winning battles; one was Rasputin and the other was the Tsarina. Now that Rasputin has been properly butchered, they are hot after the poor Tsarina. Personally, after visiting the Red Cross Train, I am on the Tsarina's side. Of course, I will admit that the Tsarina is possibly not doing much in the way of winning the war, but then, what the hell!

Diary note, Feb. 14th. On the Way to Roumania

At last I have discovered what is the matter with the blooming Tsarina. She is a native-born Boche. That explains it all very easily. Before her marriage to the Tsar, she was Princess Alix of Hesse, and incidentally the granddaughter of Queen Victoria. But her German birth explains all the difficulties. She has never been popular with the Russians. In fact, it is said that the Tsar's mother has tried to have the Tsarina bounced off several times. The Tsar's mother was truly interested in the success of Russia.

Soon now I will be with the Russian-Roumanian Armies. It is rumored that they are a greater washout than the straight unadulterated Russian outfit.

The dates in this Russian diary are according to my calendar—not the Russian calendar, which is about ten days behind time.

Diary note, Feb. 16th. With the Roumanian Army Air Corps at Jassy

There is no way of describing the conditions on the Roumanian Front. Out of 650,000 Roumanian soldiers, only 80,000 are able to fight. The figures come to me from reliable inside sources. Typhus and cholera are the enemies. The Germans merely kill off the people they can find, and let disease do the rest. In the city of Jassy 450,000 people are seeking refuge. Ordinarily, Jassy is a city of 40,000 people. Figure it out for yourself. There is no shelter, no food, nothing! People die in the streets and are not even carted away. Christ, but I'm hungry! *

* I couldn't get anything palatable to eat for love nor money and I might as well confess that I tried to use both. It seemed almost sacrilegious in the midst of all that horror, to hunt for cigarettes. There were none anyhow. There was no soap, sugar, coffee, tea nor clothing. I existed days and days on corn meal cooked into a kind of mush and served cold. It wasn't even salted. We had some beans and a little meat twice a week. The cold was intense and there wasn't a bath-house operating anywhere. Many of the doctors and nurses had died of the typhus. The principal railway station was converted into a hospital. There were about 300 beds. In each bed there were three wounded men and on the floors lay fully a thousand others.

A French doctor friend took me through the railway station hospital the day I arrived. The orderlies were examining the sick. They would tap a man on the foot with a cane. If he grunted, they would say, "He's alive!" and go on to the next. If the poor devil lay still, they would indicate to the stretcher-bearers and the body would be hauled out. There were no coffins. The bodies were loaded in box cars and hauled out of the city. I saw three hundred of them once piled up awaiting transportation.

Diary note, Feb. 17th. Jassy

The only railroad running into Russia from this point is a road of different gauge, so all the shipments have to be transferred at the frontier. It is an impossible arrangement. The Roumanian private soldier is a good fighting man, but his officers are a blank. General Berthello, who heads the French Mission to Roumania, is trying to straighten things out as fast as possible, but he has a hell of a job. Fourteen Roumanian officers were executed yesterday. Among them was General Souchec and Colonel Sturtza. In the future, a French officer will be attached to each Roumanian Regiment, and the French Officer will have the authority.

Diary note, Feb. 18th. En route to Galatz

On the Baralde and Gatala railroad, a train of 60 coaches (mostly refugees and wounded soldiers) ran into a freight train. I saw the collision from a distance of about 200 meters. The engineer of the freight was an Austrian. He is still at large, having escaped the wreck by jumping. It is all very suspicious. They say that nearly 1,000 people will die. The passenger train had two locomotives pulling and one pushing and was going quite fast. Christ, what a mess it was. Fortunately, I flew away very soon afterwards.

Diary note, February 19th. Galatz

Saw the Crown Prince Carol. He has no chin. The French officers here who know Carol say that he will play hell making a King of the Roumanians. Queen Marie and King Ferdinand have eighty-six servants with them; about fifty per cent. of them are Germans or Austrians. General Berthello is looking into this and the

German servants are sore as hell. I hope he shoots the bastards, men, women, and children.

Later—same day

Disquieting news comes from Petrograd. They say that the inside information points to labor troubles of a very serious nature. Crown Prince Carol not only has a receding chin, but pimples besides. He is a washout in my estimation.

Diary note, February 20th. Galatz

This story about the beautiful Blue Danube is all a damned lie. It is (if possible) a little muddier than the old Mississippi. Today I encountered two antique German Albatrosses flying along on the "beautiful Blue Danube." I had the altitude on them and also the desire to fight. This desire is something new on the Russo-Roumanian front. When I pulled over and started firing at the nearest Boche, you should have seen the surprised look on the observer's face. Both Germans went into action at once, but the first one was too late. I saw the old observer go down in the rear cockpit and next thing I knew the plane was heading for the river.

Meanwhile, Boche No. 2 thought better of the situation and started home. But the Spad out-distanced the antique Albatross in about one minute and a half and after that, it was merely a matter of shooting five or six good long bursts. Boche No. 2 made a lovely fire, but No. 1 landed in the shallow water of the river and I had to let him go at that. They tell me back at the field that I will be decorated with everything in the Roumanian Army. As if that matters a damn anyhow!

Diary note, February 21st. Galatz

In the diplomatic mail pouch this morning came a letter from Paris. Mata-Hari has been arrested and accused of being a very important spy. She will no doubt be tried and they might even attempt to execute her. Have made friends with an important Roumanian family here—the name is Duluvara, and for the first time in my Roumanian experiences, I have been properly fed.

Diary note, February 22nd. Galatz

Took off at 7.00 A.M. this morning with a Russian partner of mine and headed for Sofia, where we intended to bomb the Kaiser, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Bulgaria, and the Sultan of Turkey. According to the Intelligence Office reports, all these dignitaries were at the Palace in Sofia and it looked like a nice little bombing party was in order. The route was Bucharest, Nilkopo and then Sofia. Owing to the clouds, the flight had to be carried on at 2,000 meters. It was a hell of a flight going, but not so bad coming back. When at last we found we were over Sofia, I picked out the Palace and my partner started for the Parliament buildings. My first bomb was a direct hit. I let go at about 100 meters. The second one was a miss; it landed in the gardens. But the third was a perfect shot. I could see the people running in all directions and how I did wish my second bomb had been a luckier strike.

My partner made three perfect hits and left one of the Parliament buildings with a great gaping hole in the roof.

It cleared up on the return trip. When we landed on the field at Galatz, we were congratulated by everyone from King Ferdinand down. But I was hungry and wanted to rest a bit, so I cut the ceremony very short in lieu of lunch.

Diary note, February 23rd. Galatz

Received the St. Stanislaus medal and the decoration called Vertu Militaire. King Ferdinand officiated and the ceremony was, as usual, very grand. It was a pitiful sight to watch those poor hungry privates trudging around in the mud while I was being decorated. Had a letter from Lufbery today. The Lafayette moved the 27th of January to St. Juste. Luf says life is rather dull and wishes he were in Russia with me. I do too. Am going to take a little vacation tomorrow. Will try and go to Odessa and then to Sevastopol. There is a town up the way from Kishenev named Bender. I thought that a bender was a kind of drunken orgy. Now I discover that it's a city. Will wonders never cease!

Diary note, February 28th. En route to Petrograd

This is how I went to Odessa—from Galatz to Taslyk and then to Akkerman; then across the inland sea which is about ten kilometers and then landed at Odessa. There was a flat place near a village named Malyi. It was only 200 kilometers from Odessa to Eupotoria and fifty kilometers from there to Sevastopol. Crimea is a semi-tropical place and one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen. How I do wish I could have stayed there a long while, but I had to go back north and report to headquarters again. My Spad has functioned perfectly.

At Odessa a very pretty little person came up to me and said, "I am Romain." I said, "Do you mean that you are a Roumanian?"

"Oui, monsieur, I am Roumania. I am wife Roumania."

"Very well," I said, "go on your way and sell your papers."

But she said, "No, no, you not comprehend. I am friend you. I am friend thee."

So I carried on the rest of the conversation in French, much to her disappointment. She wanted to display her English. She proved to be the widow of a Roumanian officer who had been killed off early in the war. She wanted to go back to Paris with me and thought that the air route was best. It took me all afternoon, part of the evening, and some of the night to convince her of her error. I have no idea of taking on a homeless woman; not out in this Russian country, at least. It would have been great stuff to have helped that little girl, but when I saw the extent of her baggage, I said no finally and forever. She had fourteen trunks, three hat boxes, a traveling bird cage and a provision hamper. She was rich too. But she would not travel without the baggage.

Diary note, Moscow. Some time later (on the way north)

From here I go to a little place southwest of Petrograd where I shall be decorated by Tsar Nicholas for whatever I did at the front. Soon I shall have to use a valise to carry the medals and decorations. I wish I had time to examine this city. It surely is a beauty. There are constant rumors of trouble, revolution, etc. The common people are hungry; they have been hungry too for a long while. Christ, why doesn't the Tsar do something about it! What a chance for some wise American organizer! Think of it! All of Russia might go to pot for the want of a little wise management.

Diary note. (Still going north. Heading for Peskof)

Passed over the Volga River today; that is, the tail end of it. Most people in America, including myself, be-

lieve that the Volga empties into the North Sea up somewhere near Petrograd, when in fact, it is a southern river and a hell of a big one.

Diary note, March 7th. City of Peskof. (General Russky's Headquarters)

The Tsar decorated me today. He spoke very good English, without the slightest trace of an accent. His uniform didn't fit and he wore his hat on the side of his head like a British Sergeant Major on leave. The Tsar wears facial hair like most Russians, and in some strange manner, resembles King George of England, except the Tsar is not as well taken care of. The King of England must look after his health, but the Tsar has eye-bags under each eye and a very sad, wistful look in his face. He wore a kind of Sam Browne belt with two shoulder straps. His body-guard, or the Konvóy, as they call it, is a damned handsome outfit. They would surely make a hit in the Opera Comique. How I would love to get hold of one of those outfits, particularly the hats, and their knives. They do look fierce.

The ceremony today was positively medieval and damned impressive. If these folks could organize their armies and carry on the war as well as they carry on their ceremonies and their flag wavings, something might happen. But it looks hopeless, or rather, it sounds hopeless. On every hand, people talk reform, revolution; murder the Tsarina, kill Stummer, or Count Fredericks, or Protopopoff. There are strikes already in Moscow and Petrograd. Tomorrow I go to headquarters and perhaps in a few days I shall be out of the country. How glad I will be to see the boys in N-124 and N-103 again. No Russia for me—never again!

Diary note, March 8th. Hotel de France, Petrograd. (February 23rd, Russian time)

In the mail pouches today at headquarters, I had letters from the Lafayette outfit; also a letter from Nungesser. He tells me that Mata-Hari will be tried as an *espionne* and that her chances look rather slim. What a stir her conviction will make—now that she has slept with practically every important person on the continent,—French, Germans, Hollanders, Spanish, Belgians, etc. There were riots and minor disturbances on the streets today—it looks like trouble.

Diary note, March 9, 1917. Petrograd. Friday

Things happened today—bread riots—endless mobs of people marching along singing wild songs, throwing bricks into street cars. I asked a Russian friend of mine why the people didn't go ahead and have a revolution and get it over. He said that the church dignitaries were unwilling. According to the report, God still loves the Tsar and it would be a misfortune to revolt against a ruler who stood in well with God.

This kind of fairy story didn't draw much water with me, but I had to be serious about it and say some attempted wise things to cover up my amusement.

Once this afternoon I saw a procession of workmen carrying placards. One of them said, "Give us bread!" Others said, "Give us land!" or "Save our souls!" At the end of the procession came a little girl carrying a tiny banner. On it was written, "Feed your children!" It was the most pathetic thing I ever saw in my life.

There is no food to be had. Everyone is horribly hungry. A woman friend of mine who lives at the Hotel du Nord just across from the Nikolai Station has a good supply of sugar. She has given me quite a lot.

Later

Just before sundown, the police tried to disperse a crowd of workmen and their wives who had gathered in front of the Nikolai Station. The police were using both whips and swords. Suddenly a detachment of Cossacks appeared. The leading Cossack calmly rode up to the Captain of the Police, drew his revolver and shot the Captain through the head. As the Police Captain fell to the ground, the Cossack leader shot two more shots, both hitting the unfortunate policeman. There was a wild yell. The policemen, seeing the look of certain murder on the faces of the Cossacks, spurred their horses and fled in great haste.

Immediately, the crowd rushed up to the Cossacks and patted their horses and talked very kindly among themselves, the Cossacks telling the crowd to go home quietly. From this, I judge that the Revolution is a serious possibility.

Diary note, March 10, 1917. Petrograd

This morning I decided to leave the country, but found that I could not get my passport viséd. The street cars are out, the railroads are practically stopped and the city is starving. Everywhere the people are pleading with the Cossacks, pleading with the soldiers, trying to make the military understand that hunger and cold and wretchedness and poverty are the reward they have received for their loyalty to the Tsar. It looks as if I'm stuck here, and I've decided to see the thing up as close as possible. There are all kinds of rumors. Some say that the Government is inciting the workers to a Revolution which will be suppressed in one cruel swipe as a lesson to the common people.

Diary note, March 11th, Sunday. Petrograd

The city is covered with great posters telling the populace not to stop in bunches on the streets, as the Tsar has ordered that any disturbance will be handled by the military authorities—the police would shoot to kill, etc. It is impossible to believe anything. My Russian friend who told me all about how much God loved the Tsar now says that the Revolution might go on at will. It is rumored that God no longer loves the Tsar. It might even be that God never did love the Tsar, not even long ago when Nikolai was young and popular, before he married the Princess from Hesse.

Diary note, March 12th. Petrograd, Monday Morning

All night there was firing. I am told that the police have located machine gun nests on the tops of all the principal buildings. A great number of soldiers from the Volynski regiment have mutinied and killed their officers. Yesterday's posters are covered up with a new lot. Today we are informed that all workmen who remain away from their respective jobs will be sent to the front at once. The strike must be stopped. At noon I saw a seething mob of men and women running down the Nevsky Prospekt headed by a collection of soldiers waving swords and banners. They were crying, "Down with Nikolai!" "Down with the Government! Give us bread! We are the masters! Down with the police!" Then I knew that the Russian Revolution was a reality.

It is a Revolution carried on by chance. There is apparently no organization, no particular leader—just a city full of hungry people who have stood enough and are ready to die if necessary before they will put up with any more Tsarism. As I watched that mob of screaming peo-

ple I thought of the tired, far-away look in the Tsar's eyes. He must have known that the dry rot had eaten the heart out of things. What a chance for a smart organizer, someone who really has the fortunes of these hundred and seventy millions of Russians at heart. No one seems to know where the Tsar is. Some say that he has committed suicide and confessed to the most extraordinary crimes against the people.

The slaughter in the streets today was unbelievable. I can understand men being killed, but women and children —no. The Astoria Hotel has been practically ruined and many officials with their entire families have been killed. They are said to have suffered terrible deaths. My friend who lives at the Hotel du Nord was wounded yesterday by a stray bullet. It seems that when these folks are shooting at you, you are quite safe, but God help the innocent bystander who is not being shot at. He will get potted. The Pathé movie man is sticking on the job and shooting some of the scenes whenever he can without running a risk of losing his camera. This morning I saw the dinner menu at the Hotel de France for a year ago, and then I remembered what we had yesterday for dinner—steamed fish, potatoes and black bread, with unsugared tea. What a difference from the many-course lay-out of twelve months back!

Diary note, Tuesday, the 13th, 1917. Petrograd

The Revolution is now looked upon as a success. The people have killed off so many police and taken the machine gun nests that finally there can be very little resistance. The Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul is the Revolutionists' Headquarters. All the political prisoners have been released. The courts of justice and the near-by jail houses have been destroyed and all the convicts released.

All the prisons in Siberia have released their exiles. The streets are full of soldiers and Cossacks going to the Duma to take the oath of allegiance. I can't understand what they are taking the oath of allegiance to, but there must be a new organization of some kind. Casualties in Petrograd will be very high.

The soldiers march along with fixed bayonets and red flags or red kerchiefs attached to the bayonets. It is reported that some of the convicts want to go back to jail; they think life in the streets of Petrograd is too hazardous. I almost agree with them. There is a newspaper being published now named *Izvestia.* It is a single-sided sheet and tells its story in short cryptic paragraphs.

Later

There was a fire in the street in front of the Passport and Criminal Records Bureau. All the records in Russia were destroyed.

This rumor about the Tsar committing suicide seems to be a well-founded one; but then, there are rumors about everything. The prison of St. Peter and St. Paul is being filled up with ex-ministers and royalists.

Diary note, Wednesday 14, 1917. Petrograd

It is rumored that the name Petrograd will be changed very shortly. Count Fredericks' household has been destroyed; his wife and another woman were found in the place alone and were beaten nearly to death. All the furnishings and valuables were either carried off or burned. Fredericks has been the chief of the Tsar's domestic organization for many years. Fredericks is a German of the Prussian type and the people hate him terribly. They mean to kill him if ever they lay hands on him. More fires in the streets! The workers are burning

up the wooden royalty insignia—eagles, crows, etc. The Soldiers' Committee posted the city today in favor of giving up strong drink. Everywhere I looked, there were signs asking all the comrades to refrain from liquor.

A Provisional Government has been formed. The names signed to the posters are Kerenski, Rodzianko, Milyukoff. I hear the people talking about two women who have just been turned out of Siberia. They have been in exile; one since eleven years. Their names are Katherine Breshkovsky, known as Babuska and Spirodonova. Spirodonova killed a Russian Governor named Lupjenovsky and did eleven years for it. The Governor apparently needed killing though. He was a brutal bastard, according to rumor.

Diary note, Wednesday, March 15, 1917. Petrograd

Spent the day trying to figure out some sure way of getting out of the country. Condition of Revolution same as yesterday, perhaps worse! Shooting everywhere—dead Russians everywhere—mostly dead policemen!

Diary note, Thursday, the 16th. Petrograd

Nikolai Romanoff the Second signed the abdication last night. (It seems that the suicide story was all bilge.) I discovered this tremendous piece of news today through a friend of mine who is in the French Intelligence Department. A committee from the Duma called at Pskoff where the Tsar had been with General Russky and the Imperial Guards. The committee demanded action and action in a hurry. So the Tsar, refusing to abdicate in favor of his son, left the throne to his brother Michael. They say that in the last moments the Royal Bodyguard deserted Tsar Nikolai. The city is plastered full of new posters. This time they tell the soldiers that they are free, and that they are not required to salute their offi-

cers any more. This means nothing though, as most of the officers around Petrograd are already murdered. Nearly every soldier I have talked to says that he wants the Grand Duke Nicholas for Tsar. "He is our friend," they say. "He hated Rasputin and loved the people, the Mujik, and the workers."

I would say that fifty per cent. of the soldiers are on their way back to their homes. They think that the Revolution constitutes a verbal armistice with the Germans. This afternoon I saw a General murdered. He was in a railway station trying to get something to eat. Some soldiers were making remarks which he resented. The General sent for an armed guard to arrest the offending soldiers, but when the guard came they arrested the General instead. They took the old General outside and a crowd gathered around. The soldiers and the crowd looked at the General like half-witted people. Finally, someone said, "What shall we do with him?" "Let's hang him; he was once on the side of the Tsar!" And they hung him. He was a good old man and one of the few artillery experts in all Russia.

A soldier said to me yesterday, "Comrade, we should be living in the Winter Palace. It belongs to us now. It is our right. Indeed, it is our duty. Do you not think so, comrade?"

Another soldier offered me a brand new motorcycle for 200 rubles. I could have bought a cannon or a machine gun for considerably less. They think everything belongs to them. I shudder to think what the Germans are going to do with this outfit unless some strong hand takes charge of matters and drives ahead toward an allied victory.

Tonight I heard some men saying that the Tsar would be brought to Petrograd and marched through the streets for all the world to see.

Diary note, March 17th, Friday. Petrograd

Never was there such a blizzard as we are having today. A diplomatic courier arrived after dark. He will possibly be the last. He brought me a letter from the Lafayette Escadrille. They have lost another man—he was bumped off March 1st.

Diary note, March 18th, Saturday. Petrograd

Today was a day of funerals, stump speeches and shivering lines of hungry people waiting in front of food depots.

Diary note, March 19th, Sunday. Petrograd

The revolutionists who were bumped off in the street fighting are being buried in red coffins. In one case, many of them were laid away in a huge grave. From what I could tell, there must have been at least fifty or more coffins all in rows and stacked on top of each other. The ceremony of burial was grand.

March 20th, Monday. Petrograd

The local war is growing uninteresting. Occasionally, a policeman or a secret spy operator of the old régime is discovered and dispatched by the nearest person who owns a loaded gun. The Duma is full of wild happenings. There is a new outfit trying to get hold of things and it calls itself "The Soldiers' and Sailors' Soviet." The word "Soviet" is a new one on me. I don't get it.

Tuesday, March 21st

I am planning to leave the country as soon as possible. Governor Francis, the Ambassador, is going to help me all he can.

Diary note, March 25th. Petrograd

I have been to Tornio on the Swedish frontier. They would not let me enter Sweden so I had to come back here and wait for a chance to get out by way of the Trans-Siberian Railway. I could have killed those damned Swedes, but they seem to have the dope on me. Someone has given them the idea that I'm a French officer (which I am), and for that reason, they will not let me cross Sweden.

One of the Swede officials understood English very well. I explained to him that Minnesota was full of Swedes, but Missouri was full of mules and I was quite sure this strange condition existed because the Missourians had first choice. The Swede official didn't see the humor of my little jibe and I left quickly before I went into action and got clapped in jail.

April 2, 1917

Everyone talks Kerenski. Today I asked one of my soldier friends what about this fellow Kerenski. He said, "Kerenski's eyes are full of visions, but his belly is full of wind. When Kerenski was a young man he used to go hungry so as to purchase law books. Now he is one of the great fathers of the Revolution, nor does he wear his hair long; and besides that, he was here all the while. He is not like the professional trouble-makers who were in Switzerland, and Norway and Sweden and the United States only waiting for the Tsar to fall. Kerenski ran the risks with the rest of us. But he is a sick man, and his wife no longer loves him."

Day after tomorrow I go to Kerenski's office to have him O.K. my passport. All the foreigners in Russia are being checked up. This story about Kerenski going hun-

gry to buy books is only a yarn. His folks were *petit noblesse* and he was rich while at school.

Diary note, April 5th

Petrograd is not what it used to be. The streets are jammed with straggling peasants, rough shod men, lean horses, wounded soldiers—workmen who refuse to work; regiments of badly equipped soldiers apparently going up to the front; forage wagons, provision wagons—all rumbling day and night along the Nevsky Prospekt. In the old days this never happened. Such traffic existed, but it never came near the city of the Tsars. Now everything belongs to everybody and they are letting the devil get the hindermost.

Today I asked one of the chambermaids at the Hotel how the Revolution had affected her life.

"Well, comrade," she said, "the most trying problem is my husband and his two brothers. Before the Revolution they were mechanics and worked every day. Now they refuse to work saying that the worker is supreme and the capitalist must pay!"

"What do your men folks do with themselves now that they no longer work?"

"They just sit," she said, "just sit!"

Diary note, April 10th

Governor David R. Francis, the American Ambassador to Russia, is a life-saver these days. I go up to his home very often and we have dinner and talk on war and the possibilities of a Russian Republic, etc. Governor Francis is from Missouri and therefore he and I are very good friends. Also the Governor puts out excellent dinners.

April 11th

It is rumored that Kerenski will marry a very beautiful and very talented actress. This is, of course, only talk, but the Russians take it very seriously. I have decided to develop a sweetheart myself. It's the only way to pass off the dullness of this place until I can get away.

April 12th

Visited the Minister of Justice, Alexander Kerenski, today and had him O.K. my passport. He was very charming about it. He signed his name in one swipe and then said:

"Lieutenant Hall, I am the man of the hour in Russia. The people do not know it yet, but they will. I am the only man who can pull the iron out of the fire and before long, I shall do it. Russia must have a dictator! It has existed under such direction too long to be without it now."

April 15th

There is a strange custom in this damned country. One is never introduced to a woman; that is, the woman's name is never mentioned. I tried at first to find out what certain women's names were but I was told that it is not done. One never sees or is ever expected to see the same woman twice; particularly, when one is a soldier.

April 28th

There is a gypsy settlement up the river, fifteen miles. I have been several times and it's great stuff. The dancing and the singing of the gypsies goes "big." (This "goes big" expression is fresh from the States. Chouteau Johnson brought it back at Christmas-time.)

May 1, 1917

The first May Day demonstration since the Revolution! This is the thing the liberalists and the socialists and the revolutionists have waited for many a day. The demonstration was rather pathetic though. The long columns of bearded fellows in their red caps, the workers with their banners, the soldiers with their bayonets decorated with little red flags! The workers were carrying banners asking for an eight-hour day. There were factory girls too. Their banners said, "We have won liberty; now we want peace," or "let the people have the land." And all the while they played the Marseillaise and sang weird words to the noble French tune. There were Jewish men and Jewish women and ambulances full of permanently crippled soldiers.

What a motley array! How marvelous it would have been to have had a motion picture camera handy and have taken a shot of the procession. It would have made a superb colored film.

May 10th

Today I asked a Russian soldier what the attitude of the Revolution was toward the church. He said that God was out of the running at present because in the olden days God had been above the people and now that everyone and everything was equal, God was entirely discounted. I asked him what would become of the churches and the cathedrals. He thought they would be made over and used by the people as community homes.

May 11th

My Russian sweetheart is a ballerina. She was a dancer in the Imperial Ballet in the pre-Revolution days. But now she is a dancer in the Peking Café. My ballerina makes life worth while.

May 14th

It is said that Kerenski will be the most powerful person in all Russia. His statement about being the man of the hour in Russia is quite near coming true. A freight train on the Trans-Siberian Railway is promised for the 15th of June.

May 17th

A messenger from General Sackarloff came to my place today and asked me if I would be willing to meet the General secretly and not mention the meeting to anyone. I said yes. But now that I have agreed to do it I am wondering if I am getting my foot into it. Tomorrow I see the General.

Later

By some underground method the General has discovered that I am planning on leaving Russia via the Trans-Siberian as soon as possible. He wants me to take his wife out of the country with me and he says that if I am successful he will see that I am well paid. I might have gotten into a mess like this down in Odessa in February. Somehow, I do not think I shall accept General Sackarloff's proposition.

Later, undated. Petrograd

An American Jew whose name is really Bornstein, but who is passing himself off as Leon Trotsky called on me and asked me if I would sell him my American passport. He offered me the equivalent of $5,000 American money.

Later, undated. Petrograd

General Sackarloff has won me over to his point of view and I have promised to convoy his wife to Japan or to America or to somewhere safely out of Russia. Leon

Trotsky (alias Bornstein) called again and offered me the equivalent of $10,000 and a pear-shaped diamond. The diamond was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. I asked him where he got it. He reared up and in his very best East Side English, said, "Lieutenant Hall, there are times when one does not ask damned fool questions." I did *not* sell the passport. Bornstein can go bloody well to hell and take his diamond with him.

Later, undated

Trotsky (alias Bornstein) has called again. He has offered to put me in a way to have something to do with the new Government which he says will overthrow the present one, and the $10,000 and the diamond if I will let him have the American passport. But I refused quicker than before. This new Government bunk means less than nothing to me. One's life is worth about ten cents as soon as he goes to dickering with the Government.

Later

At the Embassy I am told that the United States of America is in the war. They have just discoverd it. They also told me that a fellow named Nikolai Lenin and this man Trotsky have made Mr. Kerenski a proposition. It will depose Kerenski. Here is a list of the aliases used by the Revolutionists. They seem to be nuts on phoney names.

Lenin—Uljanov and Cerderbaum
Trotsky—Bornstein
Zinoviev—Apfelbaum
Sukhanov—Gimmer
Kamenev—Rosenfeld
Steklov—Nakhamkis

There are many others, but I keep these to show how rabid these lads are for changes in everything, even names.

Later, undated. Petrograd

General Sackarloff is going to send some precious metals and stones out with his wife. The valuables will be stored in my army trunk. It is a very small affair and the General thinks it will not be noticed. The metal he is sending out is platinum. If these Revolutionists ever catch me they will bump me off so quick! Oh, boy!

Later, undated. Petrograd

Wild stories come in from the outlying districts. The criminals and jail birds who were released by the Revolutionists, are robbing everyone. No one is safe. The armies are almost finished. Desertions have thinned the ranks until only a semblance of the original force remains. People say how long can Kerenski last! How long can he live! Everywhere there are lines of people waiting to buy clothing and tea and bread and cigarettes. The bulletins tell of military disasters; the streets are full of beggars and newsboys and cheap prostitutes. No one really expects the present patience to last long. Things will happen.

Later, undated. Petrograd

The Russians are the most volatile people in the world and the most easily convinced by a clever wind-jammer. That (among other lesser important things) is what Alexander Kerenski is. He sets the people wild when he makes a stump speech. I saw him on the street today. He was, as usual, wearing those dark brown cordovan leather leggins.

CHAPTER XXIX

Diary note, June, 1917. Petrograd

Listened to a street speaker last night. He said the Revolution dated back to something that happened in 1905. I asked a Russian Revolutionist friend of mine if it was a good idea to have these young hot heads carrying on with their stump speeches, and he said, "Why not! It is the safety valve!" There are no police in Petrograd; at least, I haven't been able to find any. A few students with white arm bands are the sole reminder of the law.

But the situation in the munition plants is hell. The soldiers dismissed their officers and now the workers have dismissed their foremen and bosses. Naturally, the workers quit whenever they get bloody well ready. The armies at the front have no shells; everything is in a hopeless mess.

Russia, however, still thinks she is in the War. Yesterday, I saw a copy of the April 9th statement covering the objects of the war. It was a long statement, but it very clearly states that Russia means business—no peace without a victory, etc.

Lenin's gang tried to put on an anti-American demonstration recently, but it was a flop.

Later, undated

Today I heard Kerenski make a speech. I couldn't understand much of it. He spoke so rapidly that I got lost in my translation. But I didn't need to understand it word by word—I got the meaning of it just the same.

At the end, he stood with his arms outstretched, high over his head. It's a characteristic Kerenski gesture. Then with his voice trembling and covered with emotion, he screamed, "Russia! Freedom! Love! Peace! God! Happiness! Russia!"

I could understand that part. It was glorious—men and women wept. One little old fat woman was kneeling down praying, her body swaying back and forth like a Missouri negro. A friend of mine listened to the prayer and told me that there were only three petitions—Kerenski's life, the life of her soldier son who was at the front, and the success of a war loan to which she had just subscribed.

Later, undated

I have taken on a valet; his name is Peter and he is something of a hunchback. He once belonged to the establishment of Ambassador Francis. But the Ambassador is cutting down on his pay roll, so I inherited Peter. I have named him "Peter the Ugly." This morning my ballarina visited me quite early. Peter the Ugly was making a fire and looking after my breakfast. My ballarina brought me a gift. It was a flower in an ornamental pot. It was her way of proving her love for me. She wants to get out of the country. If I'm not careful I'll be having a regular traveling female seminary—a personally conducted tour of escaping women. The flower was a red one and reminded me much of what my mother used to call a "perennial pink." Think of bringing a man a flower before he has had his breakfast!

Later, undated. Petrograd

I leave in three days. It will be a freight train with a few passenger coaches. The War at the front goes from bad to worse. As it is coming summer, the nights are

scarcely dark at all—just like dusk. The Russians call it the "white nights." Petrograd is awake almost twenty-four hours every day now. The people seem to be afraid to go to sleep for fear something will happen when they are not looking. Then too, it is not stylish to go to bed in Russia. They say to me that it is just too stupid to waste the night in sleeping. But the state of things is terrible. The Duma and the Committees are in a terrible muddle. The so-called Soviet is gaining power—the Soviet and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Committee.

Later, undated, Petrograd

I have at last paid my bill and broken the sad news to my ballarina. She will not go to Vladivostok with me. She was very sad, but she said, "It is my fate, alas!" I convinced her that one woman at a time is enough. The General's wife is a middle-aged, motherly person and she will require all my attention if any of the Revolutionary Guards finds out who she really is. During last night there was a demonstration of great proportions. No one seemed to know why. The Nevsky Prospekt and all the adjoining streets near the Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan were crowded with men and women. It is said that a counter-revolution is in progress. The Soviet is trying to overthrow Kerenski.

Next day. Petrograd

Last night I visited some friends and told them good-bye. The usual collection of students and politicians was there. Everyone drank tea—everyone except myself was intoxicated with ideas and talk. If these damned Russians don't stop talking to me about their reactions and their souls, I'll go mad. Now that it is no longer stylish to talk religion, this soul talk becomes hot stuff. From

my friends last night I discovered that Tsar Nicolai and the Royal Family are imprisoned at the Tsarskoe Selo Palace. The Tsar is referred to as "Citizen Romanoff" officially and as "Gospodin Polovinik" (the old Colonel or Mr. Colonel) by the Revolutionist Guards. The general practices of religion were denounced by the youngsters at last night's gathering. One of them repeated a saying that seems to be going the rounds down at Moscow. It is this: "Religion is the people's opium!"

The others in the party seemed to think that this was a very wise speech. The counter-revolution is much talked of—almost as much as the "soul." I rode home in an open hack. There were two horses. The driver lashed the poor animals, but nothing happened. They were beyond the possibility of rapid motion. The driver was a fierce-looking person, of much hair and a silly hat.

En route, about fifty miles east of Petrograd

At last we are on the way. Christ, what a trip this will be! The passenger coaches promised by the railway officials did not materialize. The train is made up of endless freight cars and three baggage coaches converted during the war to resemble a crude kind of sleeping car. There is a trumped-up kitchen in one of the converted coaches. This same one contains a few meager food supplies. We stop everywhere. Every time we stop, a few thousand soldiers and traveling peasants get on our train and what's more, they stay on. No use to explain to them that the train is already full or that you have bought a through ticket. That would merely start the Revolution all over again. Some of these soldiers and most of the traveling peasants have never been on a train before. But now that everyone owns everything, they have decided to ride the pants off the railroads and see what the country is like.

Meanwhile, like a fool, I bought a ticket. Now I find out that out of about one thousand passengers, there are perhaps only twenty-five ticket-holders. The others are just riders, going wherever the train is going and whenever it happens to go. When there is no more room inside, they ride on top. The passengers on top have a special name. I can't spell it, but it means "aerial riders." The first time we go through a tunnel, we'll lose about three or four hundred "aerials." The engineer possibly won't even stop. Oh, this is great stuff—this business of everybody owning everything.

Night. Second day out

If only I had a motion picture machine—one that could take colored pictures—what a film I would have! The trip is taking form. The cast of characters is established. The actors will have about fourteen days to act out their parts. Some say it will be longer. We stop everywhere. The "aerial riders" increase. Among the permanent passengers with whom I am lodged are Madame Sackarloff, a Jewish intellectual named Berchickoff, who has something to do with the Government and is going to Vladivostok for Kerenski. Personally, I wouldn't trust him as far as I could see him, but that's Kerenski's business if he really is going on an errand for the dictator. Then we have an old soldier named Ivanoff (there is something mysterious about this old boy too; it is said that he was a General) and an aged mother with a half-witted son named Michail, and a daughter named Anna and a grandson named Alexei. Traveling with this last mentioned outfit is an elderly fellow who must have been somebody at some time by the name of Monsieur Amethystovski, and a very beautiful daughter named Anna Madeleina. The daughter is sick. She looks tubercular to me. All

these names have been given me by the half-witted son Michail. He is not nearly as nutty as his mother thinks he is. He speaks very fair English and perfect French. I have named him Mike. We shall be friends.

Whenever we stop any length of time, our party is usually joined by an assistant freight and express handler who is as dirty as a tramp, but even so, can't fool me. I plied Mike with questions and he has confessed that our baggage smasher is a disguised prince who passes himself off under the name of Roukiski. His real name is Prince Dolgorousky, and he was on the Tsar's staff until the Imperial family cracked up. He plans to get out of the country as quietly as possible.

My friend Mike, the half-wit, is very much in love with Madeleina Amethystovski, and I may as well say that the adorable little Leina is not displeased thereat. Leina is so beautiful and so appealing in her semi-sick manner that it makes me all weak and trembly every time I go near her. Mike and I are stealing a little lumber every time we stop with the idea of making her a more comfortable chair. I spend most of my time either sitting on or watching my foot locker, which contains the precious metals belonging to the Madame Sackarloff. That little trunk contains five teakwood boxes of platinum and gold bullion, and I am quite fat around the middle from the three leather bags of jewels I have fastened to my undershirt. They also belong to Madame Sackarloff. She tells me every day that I shall be well paid. That's about all she says too; poor woman, she is so lonely.

Mike's sister, Anna Buxhoevden, is the mother of little Alexei. Alexei was born April the 15th (American calendar). I, like a blue-bellied damned fool, asked her about her husband. Tears came into her eyes. She snuggled the baby up closely in her arms and said that she was

in a terrible disgrace. Her husband was not her husband —he had only been her lover. He had been an officer in the Svodny Polk and had died protecting the Tsarskoe Selo Palace. Little Alexei had been born outside the law. I tried to say something comforting, but it was lost in the rumble of the car wheels. That's a good place for comforting speeches, by God! She doesn't need comfort. She has her little son and sewed into the seams of her coat are precious stones enough to take care of her for a long while.

Little Alexei is a knockout. I don't think I've ever seen a more beautiful baby. If I could only speak enough Russian so that I could explain to Anna Buxhoevden how damned lucky she is in being able to remember her husband as a brave Russian—a prince who died for what he thought was right—but best of all, that he was a wonderful lover and not just a plain, uninteresting lawful husband. Mike understands this, but he said that he dared not explain it to his mother. It would only be another example of insanity.

Next day, stopping in the outskirts of Vyatka

Last night a hospital train stopped beside us. It smelled to high heaven. Iodoform. Disinfectants. Half-dead bodies and some that must have been more than half. God knows where it's going, this far away from the hospital centers. Our traveling Jew, Berchickoff, who is going to Vladivostok for Kerenski, made a speech to a collection of soldiers and peasants last night. He said that there was never a revolution like the Russian Revolution—one that had accomplished its purposes with fewer mistakes, and had been carried on with less interference with the rights of individuals. I do not trust this Jewish fellow, although I must admit he knows his stuff.

Mike and I have finished the reclining chair for little Madeleina. It's a hell of a looking affair, but she seems to like it. Last night I caught Mike and Madeleina locked in a furious embrace. Today she seemed to be much better off than before. Mike's tonic is much more effective than the stuff Monsieur Amethystovski pours out five times a day for the poor little sick girl.

Mike and the freight handler Prince and I have had a long talk. The Prince says that opinion was divided about Rasputin. He says that many people still believe that the Rasputin legend was mostly trumped up and that the Revolution started out to be a Grand Ducal Cabal—a trick to depose Nickolai in favor of Grand Duke Cyril, or Nickolai's next brother, Michail. The Prince says that the Tsarina was not half bad—only rather dumb.

The more I listen to these people, the more I am convinced that Russia is an incredible legend; and if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I should declare it be a Never, Never land—a hokus pokus that never did exist.

Comrade Berchickoff (Kerenski's representative to Vladivostok) has gone to talking about his soul. I thought that the railroad trip would stop this soul lingo, but it seems that wherever Russia goes, the soul talk must go also. I told Berchickoff to shut his goddamned mouth and give his soul a rest. Mike thinks the Americans are so naïve. He is charmed with the idea of giving one's soul a rest.

Every time our train stops, it seems to be the signal for a holiday. Everyone for miles around comes to the station, just to see the train. I used to think that this interest in steam cars was limited to the Kentucky mountains and the Ozark mountains, but I see I'm mistaken. Today a pathetic thing happened. Two little peasant girls got on our train and forgot to get off. They realized

that something had happened about two hours later when they were thirty-five miles from home. I last saw them standing on a way-station platform weeping voluminously. Christ knows how they'll ever get home, with the trains running every three months. The food we have been having is too terrible to mention. But old General Ivanov, or Ivanoff, however you spell it, promised a real feast to the entire party whenever we arrive at Irkutsk. That's his home apparently or the home of some near relatives. Every time we stop I hope it's Irkutsk.

Next day. City of Perm

Roukiski, the freight handler Prince (who is a peach of a fine fellow, by the way), has broken the sad news to me. Irkutsk, where we eat as General Ivanoff's guests, is about seven days' drive from where we are; that is, if we pick up speed as we have been doing the last two days. Mike and I steal all the food we can and "divvie" up on our own for both Anna Buxhoevden (who is nursing little Alexei) and Madeleina Amethystovski. I talked to Madeleina yesterday. She told me she had known Mike since she has been seven. They have always been sweethearts. Mike was injured in the first year of the war and has been looked upon as a nut ever since. Madeleina is a beauty.

Poor little Madeleina! The trip is surely not doing her any good. Mike and I sit up and talk most of the night these nights, me sitting on my foot locker and Mike sitting beside Madeleina's bunk. Madeleina coughs terribly at night. Madeleina may not survive the journey.

I would like to know where in the hell Comrade Berchickoff gets the fish he eats. I've never smelled such a putrid odor as the stench that comes from those fish. He explained to me today that the more intelligent Russian

Revolutionists were ashamed of the United States of America—ashamed of us because we allowed ourselves to live under a capitalistic government after we had won our freedom from Capitalism and Imperialism in 1776. I "yessed" him and "noed" him and let him talk. I have discovered that Comrade Berchickoff is not a bad fellow. He has a whale of a lot of influence with the Revolutionist Guards along the way and although he realizes that he is traveling with a gang of Imperialists, he has done everything to make our trip at least endurable. He said to me yesterday:

"Amerikanska, the Jews know what suffering is. These Imperialists whine when they haven't enough to eat. Suppose they were lashed with Cossacks' whips and probed with bayonets besides. But for me, I shall practice the teachings of my fathers. I have read the book. You and your friends are safe with me—quite safe!"

I told him I was sorry I had been rude the day before and cursed him about his soul talk. He explained that the Jew had suffered blows too long to be affected by mere words, either good or bad. Christ, I was nonplussed. The bloody Jew is a philosopher.

Next day, Ekaterinburg

We have been through part of the Ural Mountains. It was a change from the endless mud huts decorated in blue and pink. Today we were quite cold. Little Madeleina suffered. We wrapped her up in our coats. Mike's mother might help a bit, but she is practically out of the picture. She sits and moans all day, saying over and over that the end of all things has come. Comrade Berchickoff tricked up a small metal tank which we filled with hot water at the railway stations. It helped to warm up Madeleina's feet. Mike declares that he will kill him-

self if she dies. At the railway stations, we took the hot water from the *kipiatok*, which is a hot water tank intended for the making of tea. Every time the train stops, there is a riot around the *kipiatok*.

A special kind of Cossack seems to grow up here in the Ural mountain country. They were rather splendid looking fellows, the ones we passed today, with their high fur hats all decorated with gold braid; boots turned up and very pointed; their daggers and swords and belts of red leather.

The rain added to our discomfort today. The forests dripped. Our food grows steadily worse. Only Comrade Berchickoff has all he wants, and no one will help him eat it either. It's that awful fish. God, how it smells! If we can only hold up until we get to Irkutsk where General Ivanoff says he will feed us right. Baby Alexei is thriving. I am making friends with the mother, Anna Buxhoevden. It's a dangerous process though, because I am quite certain as soon as she gets to know me well enough, she will give out the news about her wild desire to go to America. Women always want to go places with me, particularly during war times.

Roukiski, the freight handler Prince, tells me that many Russians blame Sir George Buchanan for helping in the Revolution. He doesn't know whether Buchanan got into it on his own hook or whether he was acting at the suggestion of the Allies. It sounds rather fishy to me, but Roukiski is so damned sincere about it that one can hardly keep from at least wondering. The soldiers and the guards call him Comrade Roukiski, but Comrade Berchickoff smiles. That Jew knows who everyone in the party really is. I'm expecting him to have the entire outfit arrested, including myself.

Two nights later. Omsk

Great God! what trouble we have had! Monsieur Amethystovski turned up missing yesterday and no one has seen him since. We don't know whether he fell off the train during the night or whether he committed suicide over Madeleina's condition. Mike's mother, Madame Buxhoevden, is doing what she can, but the old girl is a washout. Anna Buxhoevden is saving the situation; she has given little Alexei to Madame Sackarloff and is trained-nursing Madeleina in fine style.

Madeleina is very sick. We are all very hungry. Madeleina wept hysterically over the disappearance of her father. Our Jew friend, Comrade Berchickoff, has had telegrams sent back asking the police to look up old man Amethystovski, but we have little hope.

All day the stations were crowded with peasants—mujiks in their colored blouses; some of them in holiday attire—yellowish white native linen affairs; their trousers stuffed down into the inevitable boots. They are gigantic fellows with unbelievable beards. They have a saying, "To shave destroys the image of God!"

The women have flat faces and are beginning to look more Mongolian than before. Once I saw an old mujik whose face was a yellowish brown and all crinkled like the face of some ancient Chinese ruler. The women wear the damnedest combinations of colors—pink, blue, red, white, lavender, and then the unbleached linen color of their blouses. I'll bet no one has ever found out how many different peoples there are in the Russian Empire.

Later in the same night

Telegrams from Petropavlovsk tell us that they have no trace of old man Amethystovski. We didn't tell Madeleina about it, as she was asleep. It is the consensus

of opinion that the old boy stepped off as we were crossing over one of the bridges. Madeleina is in a terrible state and Mike is not far behind her. I had a feeling that this trip would be more than a train ride.

Ninth day, beyond Kainsk

No news of Madeleina's father. Fortunately, she was carrying the family's fortune and can pay or bribe her way through. But the poor child has wept and coughed for nearly three days now and her poor little body is almost used up. Mike is constantly at her side. Old General Ivanoff says we should be in Irkutsk in three days and if Madeleina can last out that long he will see that she has every comfort his place can offer. But I do not believe Madeleina will step off. These people have the fear of God in their hearts and they are going to get out of the country alive or dead.

Tenth day, Atchinsk

Madeleina is worse! Everything is worse! Comrade Berchickoff, the Jew, is the only cheerful one in the party. No, I take that back; the freight handler Prince is cheerful too. He is happy over the prospects of being in China where the Revolutionists can't get at him. Today there was a fight on the station platform. It started over some food. Several men were stabbed, one quite fatally. A Tartar caused all the trouble. He was insulted by being offered some pork. One Russian very solemnly said, "Alas, the Tartar is a born pig; therefore, he does not care for the taste of his own flesh!"

I held little Alexei in my arms today. He is a most adorable little mite. His mother looked on with her soft radiant eyes. I am expecting her to make her confession

about wanting to go to America any day now. But I must say that little Alexei is a whizbang!

General Ivanoff is growing more excited all the time. He says that his people will be expecting us and that a feast will be waiting. May God help him if he's a liar! The station platforms are more interesting every day and the Sayan mountains are really glorious.

This morning some Revolutionary soldiers examined everyone in our party. This is the fourth time it has happened and, believe me, it was rather trying. I was damned thankful that we had Comrade Berchickoff with us. He has enough papers and passes and official seals about him to get by in hell.

We saw a marvelous gang of gypsies about sundown. General Ivanoff told me that in bargaining a single gypsy could cheat ten Jews and that a Russian Jew, unless he was watched, could skin twenty plain Russians. That gives one an idea of how slick those gypsies are. I nearly punched one of them for a goal for wanting to tell my fortune. Gosh, they were dirty! But from a distance, they made a wonderful picture.

Poor little Madeleina—we are doing everything we can but she is very bad off. And if she bumps off, I don't know what will become of poor Mike. He loves her so!

CHAPTER XXX

Eleventh day. Nichni Udinsk

Tomorrow we eat. For, unless the goddamned train runs off the track, we will surely make General Ivanoff's place at Irkutsk. All day today I have been thinking of the dinners I have had in my life; of the dinners we used to have back at Chalons in the early days of the war, when we were eating at Mimi's restaurant. Then the hors d'œuvres and the snails and the jellied fowls and all such unbelievable things one used to have back in Paris. Oh, sweet Christ, why did I ever come to Russia!

We have developed more totos (lice) than there were in the trenches occupied by the Foreign Legion (if possible). Our car was alive with bedbugs when we came, but now the lice have multiplied into a legion.

Poor little Madeleina is better. General Ivanoff is wise. He warned me against Anna Buxhoevden (little Alexei's mother). He said, "Indeed, Anna is beautiful, but when the devil is unable to deliver his messages, he sends them by a woman's hand." One simply has to think when such speeches come out, *n'est-ce pas!* No news about Madeleina's father. We've just put him down as a casualty.

12th day. Irkutsk

General Ivanoff is a truthful old fool and can he lay out the food! Can he! Good God, what a dinner! And he gave us a hamper full of food to take along. Madeleina was radiant; everyone made speeches. Even Comrade Berchickoff was on his good behavior. And what a

dinner! I went around in circles. First, we made sure that the bloody train would not go away without us; then we moved little Madeleina up to the General's place, and indeed it was some place. Nineteen people were served. And it was done in the grand old manner. Mike told me he believed the old General was using up all the reserve supplies he had on hand as the Government or God knows who would soon take everything anyhow, and Ivanoff would rather give his stuff to the folks he liked.

To begin with, they served an appetizer just like our French hors d'œuvres, except there were lots more different kinds. There were sardines and fishes from every one of the seven seas—fried, stewed, baked, smoked, dried, canned in oil, and raw. Of course, we started out with a couple of shots of the wildest, whitest liquor I ever tasted and then began the *zakouska.* They put out caviar that *was* caviar—not just fish eggs from the Chesapeake Bay, but real honest-to-God caviar. And pickled things. And sausages. And eggs done up in the goddamnedest manners. I didn't even recognize them.

Then began the drinking and the eating in earnest. Brandies from everywhere. Old rusty looking bottles, but what contents! Plum, peach, juniper brandies. Wines from every blooming place where wines grow! And stuffed fowls. And black bread and white bread and bread with apples on top and bread with fruits inside. And all the while, the samovar going with the endless tea. They call it *Chai* and drink it in tall glasses.

I looked around the table. What a collection—Jew, Gentile, American, high-born Russian noblemen, soldiers; officers of the Tsar; a low-born Jew, but an intellectual; cringing women, disillusioned youth—all gorging themselves. To top the dinner off came a roasted pig—a small one, but resting on a great platter around the animal

were rows and rows of vegetables—colored ones. First, a reddish kind of cabbage, then potatoes browned; then (what I later discovered), a species of greens, very coarse ones, but excellent! Then a reddish jelly of apples and finally, a crisp, greenish salad plant like endive. It took two people to carry the platter.

I had visions of the ancient King of England, the Bastard King of England we used to sing about in the Lafayette Escadrille. They used to serve that Bastard King in like manner, only minstrels accompanied the platter-carriers and sang songs in praise of good food and strong drink, the while the nobles gorged and besotted their bloody selves.

We finished the dinner with vodka, a forbidden drink in Russia. Then the General thanked us for coming to his humble board, for in Russia, the host is always obliged to the guests instead of the guests being obliged to their host. We waved the old fellow good-bye. There he stood, his white beard flowing down over his uniform, now relieved of its decorations and orders. There he stood, calmly waiting for the next wave of Revolution to engulf him—to destroy his once princely estates and to hang the owner perhaps, or shove a bayonet into his guts and let him suffer.

There was another inspection by Revolutionary Guards late tonight.

13th day. Verkhne Udinsk, in the Lake Baikal neighborhood

The dinner was too much for Madeleina; she can hardly speak today. No one expects her to live out the night except perhaps Mike. We have done everything one can do. Once today an old bewhiskered Russian who seemed to be above the average in intelligence, asked me

what it was like back there (he pointed in a westward direction). "What is it like in Petrograd? Is it like what they say?" I let C. B. (Comrade Berchickoff) explain, but all the while I was thinking about the Capital—about the wide streets flanked with barracks, government buildings, cathedrals, and palaces and theatres and cafés and restaurants. C. B. made a good yarn of Petrograd and led from his travel story into a stump speech about the wonders of the new government. The more I see of C. B., the more I think of Kerenski as a picker of assistants.

One of the listeners suggested that C. B. was making rash promises. "Chickens," he said, "are not counted in the spring-time, but in the autumn." C. B. said that with the hawk (Tsar Nikolai) under arrest, the chicks would be in little danger of not maturing. So they carry on their discussions by way of parable.

14th day

Madeleina is dead. Once yesterday we thought she would live, but now she is finished off. Comrade Berchickoff stood beside the body a short while after she went out and said, "My brothers, it is said in the old legends that even the greatest kings and princes had to be put to bed with a spade." And that was all the requiem she had. We sat like mutes, dumbly looking out into space—and in Russia, there is so much space.

15th day. Beside the Amur River

Madeleina was buried last night. She was given quite a lot of attention at the final moments of her earthly career. Two mujiks dug the grave and a detachment of Revolutionary soldiers stood by to give the procedure official sanction. Mike stayed behind at the grave. Noth-

ing his mother or sister could say or do would move him away from the mound that once was Madeleina. He said the Revolution had robbed him of all his possessions and caused the death of his sweetheart, so now instead of running away, he is going back in the direction of Petrograd and have revenge. What one poor, penniless, half-witted boy can do in the way of revenge against the all-powerful Revolutionary Government, is rather a doubtful quantity, but his mind was made up and when we tried to take him with us by force, a strange wild light came into his eyes. I knew then that we might as well get aboard the train and let him be.

I last saw old Mike standing beside a little fire we had built on the ground. His head bowed. His hat off. Motionless. Looking down at Madeleina's grave. It was terrible. C. B. understands Mike's feelings about the Revolution, but he refused to report it to the Revolutionary Guards. There is something intensely human about that Jew. As he said one day, he knows what suffering is. Mike's mother and his sister Anna are submerged in a speechless kind of grief. They have wept all their tears. I sit on my trunk all day and occasionally pat my belly to be sure that the jewels are there. Today reminds me of Dostoievsky, Tolstoi, Gorky and Andrev, all rolled into one telegraphic paragraph.

16th day. Chailar. (Argun River)

Two gypsies and a dancing bear. One gypsy played on a long-necked, stringed instrument. The bear danced around and around. The engineer and the conductor of our train were interested. We lost three-quarters of an hour watching the dancing bear. The Russians are children.

This morning the freight handler Prince told me good-

bye. We are in Manchuria now and he feels quite safe. He is going to take off in the direction of Peking tomorrow. He said I would be rewarded in some after-life perhaps for trying to help Russia. We shook hands. He stood up very straight and saluted and that was all. I never saw him again.

17th day. Tsitsihar

Nothing, only boredom and weeping females. I wish I could steal little Alexei. He is a joy. Food awful! C. B. eating fish. Sanitary condition of train too terrible to believe. The train also creeps—it crawls—and I am developing a taste for sunflower seeds.

17th day. Harbin

Locomotive off the track most of the morning. I asked C. B. how the new order of things would affect the Jews in Russia. C. B. admitted that the Jew was a problem. Only a few of them had been permitted to be farmers under the Tsarist rule, and many generations of enforced city living had made nervous, irritable people of them. If they go back to the soil (now that the soil belongs to the people), they will have to temper their dispositions to the speed of the earth. Crops grow slowly. The Ghetto-bred Jew will have to learn patience. C. B. is a philosopher. Saw mobs of Mongolian beggars today.

18th day. Vladivostok

I feel like falling down on my knees and singing a hallelujah. We have actually arrived at the destination. Anna Buxhoevden wants to get only as far as Japan. I was surprised and pleased. I will help her as much as I can. The other passengers will get over into China and let it go at that. Comrade Berchickoff shook my hands,

both of them, when he left me for the last time. He said that he had learned a lot from me. I don't know just what it was but I didn't argue. I told him good-bye and with Madame Sackarloff I went to look up a boat for Yokohama. Nobody knows how weary I am, and how glad at the same time. Now only 4,500 miles of Pacific Ocean stand between me and California. I shall possibly die before I really conclude the journey. I have already had too much luck.

Later

There are no boats for Yokohama. We will have to go back to Harbin and take a chance on a train for some southern Chinese port and then wait for a boat to Japan. I knew my luck was about to run out.

CHAPTER XXXI

The trip from Harbin to Shanghai was a sort of nightmare, interpolated with rusty looking illegible cities. According to a map I purchased in Vladivostok, we passed through Mukden, Tientsin, Tsinan, Nanking, Soochow.

Madame Buxhoevden with the bewitching Anna and little Alexei came with us as far as Shanghai. They had friends in Shanghai, it seems, and felt secure in that they were a good many miles from Revolutionary Russia. When I told the Buxhoevden outfit good-bye, Anna took me aside and told me quite a lot of things, part in Russian and part in French. I only understood about half of what she said, but I knew that she was addressing me in the intimate second person. The thing I understood most of all was the kiss she gave me. Or shall I say the kisses (there were more than one). For a moment it was rather hard for me to decide about whether I should take her to America or not. In a theatrical way she would surely have made a hit, but how could I have explained little Alexei. There were persons of both sexes back in the States who were only waiting for such a situation. So I left the Buxhoevdens and I've never seen nor heard of them since.

After a great many good-byes Madame Sackarloff and I took a boat at Shanghai and finally landed in Yokohama. I need not go into the difficulties we encountered with the passport bureaus. I am sure that the thinness of my hair is largely due to having been questioned and cross-questioned as to my nationality and the nationality of Madame Sackarloff. But we finally went ashore in

Yokohama and Madame Sackarloff at once went to computing the value of my protection. I do not know how she arrived at the final figure, but it was very satisfactory to me. The figure was $38,000.00 American money. She of course converted some of her jewelry into cash.

Diary note, 21st of July, 1917

The Japanese liner *Korea Maru* dropped me off in San Francisco, and two days later I was in Los Angeles back in the bosom of my family (at least, part of my family).

The next diary note is dated July 25th.

Diary note, July 25, 1917. Los Angeles, Calif.

The United States is lousy with soldiers. Every time I turn around, I see a marching column. The Government had some trouble in Los Angeles with the I.W.W. and the anti-draft organizations. One bomb was dropped into the middle of a parade. Never have I been asked so many questions. The Americans haven't the remotest idea of what the war is about—not the remotest! And as far as aviation is concerned, the average public is simply a dud. I'm already tired of the dinners and the entertainment.

Diary note, August 1st. Los Angeles

Fragmentary news from Russia seems to indicate a new attempt to overthrow the Kerenski Government. Trotsky is under arrest and Lenin has fled to Finland. If Alexander Kerenski is the man he said he was, he will handle those babies rough; if not, they'll put the skids under him yet.

. . . . . .

The California episode was full of large caliber entertainment. Peter B. Kyne, Governor Stephens and E. L. Doheny, were some of my hosts. Everywhere I was besieged with questions about what the war was. The first of October I was in Washington, D. C.—in Washington, testifying before the Senate Committee on Aviation. The Committee that interested me most was the one made up of Hudson Maxim, Reese Hutchinson, Thomas A. Edison, and Secretary Lane.

Diary note, October 4, 1917

A senator whose name I will not mention but whose voice is loud and whose brains are soft, asked me the dumbest questions the other day. I think I should record them against him. He first asked me how many airplanes it would take to lick the Germans. As there was no logical answer to this bloomer, he asked another.

"Lieutenant Hall," he said, "if the United States Signal Corps" (the Air Service was a part of the Signal Corps at that time), "if the United States Signal Corps should dispatch 500 American-made airplanes to France next month, I mean, fly them to France under their own power, would it not be possible for this superb fleet to carry enough bombs to reduce the German strongholds to a smouldering mass of ruins?" *

I said, "Senator, what kind of airplanes would they be?"

"Oh," he said, "that's unimportant. What kind would they be!" and he took up a sheet of paper with a lot of typewritten information on it. "Suppose they would be standard biplanes, or the JN-4 army tractors, or any good stout plane—any good one that could carry two or three

* The Senator had come to this committee meeting with his gang, and they numbered about fifteen, stenographers and buddies, etc.

men and the necessary cold steel!" (This word "cold steel" is used by politicians to mean munitions of war. It originally meant "the bayonet" and still does among soldiers.)

Of course, I wanted to laugh. No one has flown the Atlantic yet, and as for the standard army tractor carrying two or three men and some bombs and enough gasoline, it was just too pathetic for words.*

I stuttered around a bit and tried to be as diplomatic as possible, but the Senator did not want diplomacy. He wanted to be put in his place and finally I did it. I told him as calmly as possible that the idea of flying the Atlantic with the present equipment was sheer insanity and if 500 planes were rolled out of the hangars tomorrow morning, there wouldn't be 500 trained pilots in the entire Western hemisphere who could fly them. So the Senator left in a huff and the Committee members who remained had a hell of a good laugh.

Diary note, October 5, 1917. New York City

Guynemer is finished off. He has been missing since the 11th of September, but today I heard from a member of the French Diplomatic Mission that he is officially admitted to be shot down. He had more than fifty victories credited at Headquarters. The Frenchman who told me about this hellish piece of luck, said that the victorious Boche was not much of an aviator. Georges played his luck once too often.

* Since this writing there have been seven fairly successful trans-Atlantic flights and the minimum amount of gasoline used in the hop has been about 300 gallons. Imagine the standard army tractor of 1917 carrying 300 gallons of anything!

Diary note, October 6, 1917

According to the Boche reports, Guynemer fell near the village of Poelcappelle, but now that the British are occupying Poelcappelle nothing has been found of either Guynemer or his plane.

Still answering dumb questions. The Senator of the October 4th investigation has not returned, however.

Diary note, October 9, 1917. Washington, D. C.

This morning I was told that I would be made a Captain in the Aviation Section of the United States Marines and that I would be sent to some distant flying field to train pilots. It sounds very dull to me. I've trained all the pilots I care to train.

Diary note, October 10th. New York City, Knickerbocker Hotel

The newspapers are full of a wild story about a new invention. It is known as Liberty Gas—a kind of oxygen American aviators are going to carry when they get to France, so that they will be able to fly higher than the Germans and therefore have the edge on the Boche. It is simply too funny for words. Whoever gives such absolute bunk out to the press should be put in jail. Why, we have used oxygen in France for ages, but the American public seems to need just such unadulterated bilge. And the idea of calling it Liberty Oxygen! It would seem that this word "Liberty" is used much too often.

Diary note, October 12th. Knickerbocker Hotel, N. Y. C.

Met a gang of prospective aviators tonight at the Martinique. They have just arrived from Columbus, Ohio, where they have been at a so-called ground school. They sat back with wide eyes as I told them some of the things

they will possibly have to go through before they get into the air. Up to date, they haven't been off the ground. From what they told me of their course of training so far, I would say that a lot of valuable time has been wasted. They are staying over at Bedloe's Island for the present and are expecting to leave for overseas any day. Some of them are even standing guard over the Goddess of Liberty. They are a fine bunch of boys—all youngsters and college men, as a rule. We had a good laugh over the Liberty Oxygen. Later, went down to the "Black Cat." Going to Washington, D. C., tomorrow. Saw the big German liner at the Hoboken Pier today. They are going to call her the *Leviathan* and when she's reconditioned, she will carry troops. Today the carpenters were heaving the fine furniture and expensive fittings over the sides into the Hudson. War costs money. Someone will have to pay for refitting that boat in a few years, but the public is easy-going; they never seem to run out of patience when it comes to paying.

Diary note, October 13th. Washington, D. C.

A plane and motor named the "Liberty" will be manufactured in America. It will be turned out in great quantities. The idea of numbers seems to be more important than the idea of what the plane will accomplish. An Englishman friend of mine told me today that the British have tried their goddamnedest to prevent the Americans from manufacturing the so-called Liberty, as it is almost an exact copy of the De Haviland 4, a plane the English are about to wash out in favor of a more efficient design.

The Liberty Motor is expected to develop 400 horsepower and only weigh about 1 pound per horsepower. I am not sure of these figures, but this is the way I remember it. When I heard this sad manufacturing news,

I thought of these young cadet aviators I met yesterday at the Martinique. Those lads will have to fly these god-damned, no-account, so-called Liberties.

One would think that the Americans would profit by the mistakes of the French and the British, but no government has ever profited by mistakes of any other government.

Diary note, October 15th. Ritz Hotel, New York City

Ran into another part of that gang of cadet aviators tonight. Some of them are staying over at Mineola and the others at Bedloe's Island. The cadets had a couple of rooms in a little hotel called the Lenox, I believe; at least, they had a bathtub full of ice and beer. They told me it was in honor of other such celebrations they used to have back in Columbus, Ohio, at the Deshler Hotel. These cadets are a great gang. One of them from Indianapolis named Charley something, is only nineteen years old. The average age is about 22. Most of them are broke, so, like a millionaire, I fed 'em. My roll is decreasing though—the family got to me several times.

Diary note, October 16th. Washington, D. C.

From a California Senator friend of mine, I discovered that everything in Russia is not "beer and skittles." Alexander Kerenski is on his way out, if not already there. The unsuccessful attempts of last summer are more successful than ever. It's the Soviet with Lenin and Trotsky against the Provisional Government with Kerenski out of luck.

Diary note, October 18th. Ritz Hotel, New York City

The word "Liberty" has almost outlived its usefulness. Liberty loans, Liberty motors, Liberty oxygen, Liberty planes, Liberty cabbage (sauerkraut), Liberty ale, Lib-

erty Street, Liberty Four (an off-pitch quartette), Libertyville, and then the Americans call the French emotional. Raspberry!

Diary note, November 1st. Washington, D. C.

War Department can't decide about what to do with me. And as I am still technically in the French Army, I'm about ready to give up the idea of asking for a French discharge and just go back to N-103 if they'll have me.

Diary note, November 10th. Washington, D. C.

By the well-known inside track, we have been told that Russia is out of the war. A new government called "Bolshevism" is in power. Lenin and Trotsky are running things their own way. A three months' armistice has been signed between the Bolsheviki and the Germans. It looks as if the Boche are coming out of the Russian mess first best.

Diary note, December 4th. Washington

Heard Wilson's address to Congress today. War is declared on Austria-Hungary. Seems rather late to me. The President may be an idealist, but he surely talked hard about the Boche. No peace without a complete victory! That's the kind of talk a soldier likes to hear. This bloody business of saying, "Now neither of us can win—let's play quits and sign a peace treaty right where we are"—this "peace-at-any-price" gag gives me a pain. And for the amount of war I've made in my life-time, I think I have a right to be pained by such lunacy.

Diary note, December 5th. Washington, D. C.

The early reports about the so-called Bolsheviki in Russia have been confirmed, and the armistice between them

and the Boche really exists. This will release many Boche Divisions for the war on the Western front. Look out next spring!

Diary note, December 20th. New York City

Russian situation rotten. American motor factories are making Hisso motors. Liberty will be in production next spring. American Army may be too late. Am planning to take off for France very soon.

Diary note, December 21st. New York City, Algonquin Hotel

Received a long telegram today from the War Department about my captaincy in Air Section, United States Marines. Didn't answer it.

Diary note, January 2, 1918. Ritz Hotel, New York City

New York is a sad place these days. Although the civilian population hardly seems to know that the war is going on, the city is constantly full of soldiers and parents of soldiers. The air is full of good-byes. I haven't seen the cadets from Bedloe's Island now for more than two months. They are possibly in France now or sunk in the old cold Atlantic.

Diary note, January 6, 1918. New York Harbor. Aboard the "Rochambeau"

The War Department is still trying to decide what to do with me. But from now on, their decision won't matter much. I am going back to N-103 and ask Captain d'Harcourt to take me on as a pilot again. The *Rochambeau* is not a bad little ship and it is surely comforting to hear French spoken again.

CHAPTER XXXII

Diary note, January 19, 1918. Le Havre

The trip was long, the boys arrived,
They ripped off shirts and collars.
The pretty maid who welcomed them,
Made twenty thousand dollars.

He said the world was roundo,
He said he'd find Chicago,
etc.

That's what I think of the *Rochambeau* trip. But the food was good; there were no bedbugs (a la Russia!); the wine was red, and I was on my way to the best war I've ever seen or heard tell of.

Diary note, January 20th. Paris, France, Capital of the World

Spent all day at the War Office. They can't understand what I've been doing since last March. Being A.W.O.L. for nearly a year is a bit too much for the Honorable French Government to swallow. But I told a whale of a yarn, and later signed my name to it. They are much more interested in the condition of Russia and the bloody Revolution than about what's happening in the States.

As soon as they decide to dismiss me from Headquarters I shall go back to N-103. That is already settled. The Lafayette Escadrille is about to be disbanded and taken into the United States Army, much to the disap-

pointment of the members of the Escadrille. Tonight at the University Union, or rather the Hotel Richelieu, I met some of the same cadets who were in New York back in October, waiting for overseas orders. They are stuck down at a place called Issoudun. I looked it up and find that it's located in the county of Indre, some considerable ways south of Orleans, and not far from Chateauroux. The French have had a flying school at Chateauroux for some time, I am told.

But Issoudun must be a bastard of a place. As big as American projects usually are, and too big to be handled successfully by an outfit as unskilled as the Americans are in aviation. But like the Russians, the Americans must do things on a big scale or not at all.

Some of the Americans have been there since October and haven't seen an airplane. They are digging latrines and building cook shacks. Two of the cadets are running a camp newspaper. It is named the *Plane News*. These newspaper aviators didn't seem to mind the war as much as the ditch-digger flyers.

There were several ambulance men with this cadet aviator gang. The ambulance men are about to join the American Air Service. I suggested the French Air Service, but they said that the United States Government would not allow it. This is too bad. I would surely hate to be caught in such a mess as Issoudun must be. They say it covers thousands of acres.

Diary note, January 21, 1918

Of all people, who should I see today but Lufbery. He was standing at the desk in the Grand Hotel. Of course, we talked and talked. He said I had been reported as dead. After leaving the flying field at Cachy, the Lafayette has been at St. Juste, Ham, Chaudun in

the Aisne, St. Pol sur Mer up in Flanders, Senard in the Meuse; then back to Chadun last December and finally to la Cheppe and la Ferme de la Noblette. This last place is exactly the same spot where the old MS-38 was back in 1915, when I was first in the air. They have lost many men. Thaw is still alive and so is Captain Thénault. But Lieutenant de Laage de Meux was killed May the 28th and his successor, Arnoux de Maison Rouge, was bumped off October 6, 1917. Lieutenant Louis Verdier Fauvety is now second in command. Ronald Hoskier, that handsome devil who joined about the time I left for Russia, was lost with Jean Dressy on April 23rd. Edmond Genet from Ossining, New York, was also killed. But most disconcerting of all is the death of Jim McConnell. It happened on the 19th of March. He is buried near Ham. Captain Bill Thaw and I are the only living ones out of the original Escadrille. They have had many, many recruits, but Lufbery was not very enthusiastic about the new-comers. To tell the truth, Lufbery was not very enthusiastic about anything. He is about to go to Issoudun and take over a desk job. They say that he is too valuable to lose at the front. He must now help train the cadets.

According to Luf, this is the present fate of the Lafayette Escadrille. Bill Thaw is a Major in the United States Air Service and with the following pilots, they wish to form the 103rd Pursuit Squadron of the United States Army. These are the pilots: R. C. Bridgeman, Charles Dolan, Bill Dugan, Charles Ford, Dudley Hill, H. S. Jones, Dave Peterson, Bob Soubrain, Kenneth Marr, and Bob Rockwell. No one knows exactly what will happen.

Lufbery says that the war "ain't what it used to be," and that a German offensive is rumored to come off some

time in the spring—an offensive that will either win or lose the war once and for all.

Lufbery's commission in the United States Army is that of Major. He will wear a gold oak leaf. But what worries him most is the fact that he is, at least temporarily, off the flying list. Issoudun, after all, what a place for the greatest pilot in the United States Army!

We sat a long while over dinner and talked over the old days—Bar-le-Duc, Luxeuil. The bombing raids at Bar-le-Duc and later at Cachy. The death of Victor Chapman and Nimmie Prince and Kiffen Rockwell. And Jimmy McConnell! From the questions he asked me about Russia, I could see that the outside world knows nothing about that god-forsaken country—nothing at all!

I mentioned Lufbery's girl at Bourges. He shook his head and said, "Pneumonia. Died last December." And the famous Cigognes (Escadrille S-3) has had frightful luck. They have lost Adjutant Sanglier, Captain Auger, Lieutenant Dorme, Lieutenant de la Tour, and Captain Georges Guynemer. No one knows what has happened to Dorme. He failed to come back on May 25th of last year and the exact details of his death are unknown. Same with Guynemer. He disappeared the 11th of September with a score of fifty-three accredited victories.

The Americans have established an Aviation Headquarters at 45 Avenue Montaigne. I am going over there tomorrow with Luf to see what it's like.

Next day, Paris. January 22, 1918

Visited the Avenue Montaigne Headquarters. It is full of non-flying aviators. The American pilots call them Kiwis in honor of the South African bird who, in spite of its enormous wings, never really gets off the

ground. There is a distinct feeling of animosity between the Kiwis and the sure-nuf pilots. Lufbery is afraid that if he goes to Issoudun, he will be classified as a Kiwi.

Tonight Luf and I encountered two cadet aviators from Issoudun. They are in Paris collecting a supply of army junk for a flying outfit in Italy. They told us that most of the cadets at Issoudun have been sent away, either to Tours, France, Claremont Ferrand, France, or to some God-awful place in southern Italy, named Foggia. It isn't even on the map we looked at, but it's far south—away down in the heel of the boot. The Americans who go to Italy will be doomed to fly the Italian Capronis —those beautiful flying box-cars—those unmanageable crates! But the two cadets we talked with tonight were very much elated over the chances of going to Italy. They said anything was welcome after Issoudun. That Issoudun place must be hell!

Diary note, January 23rd. Paris

Luf and I went to Henry's Bar. Met some ambulance men. They told the sad story of their demobilization from the French Army. Their headquarters up at 21 Rue Raynouard is closed and the poor bastards have no place to go. Most of them are broke, as usual. We drank a toast to the American Ambulance Field Service. Luf told some of his experiences. He has a cataloging method of keeping facts in his mind that goes beyond anything I have ever seen. He can remember the hour, the minute, and the second of everything important in the war.

We discussed Guynemer at great length—his methods of fighting. Luf told us about the legendary day, May the 25th, when Guynemer shot down four Boche between dawn and dark. It seems that Guynemer went out on

the morning of September 11th against the best judgment of the other members of his Escadrille and, with Lieutenant Bozon-Verduray, encountered a Boche two- or three-seater over Poelcapelle. Guynemer dived to the attack, leaving Verduray to do a protection patrol until the fight was over. Verduray's attention was attracted by a flight of Fokkers and when he returned to where he had last seen Guynemer, there was nothing but space and silence. No one has ever seen Guynemer since.

Diary note, January 24th. Paris

President Wilson has uttered his peace terms. They are known as the Fourteen Points. They have naturally been received by the German Press with loud guffaws. The Germans are in a political predicament. They don't know just how to divide up France. And Alsace-Lorraine is also a bother. The State of Bavaria wants it and also the State of Prussia. I am reminded of the Russian proverb about counting the chickens in the autumn instead of the spring. Lufbery left today.

Diary note, January 25th. Paris

Met one of the cadets who is going to Foggia (or however they spell it). He's a homesick bird from Kentucky and his name is Jack Niles. They call him Hunky Jack because he speaks the Italian language. We had a swell dinner at the "Rat-Jazz" and Jack told me about his father who is a country Sheriff back in Kentucky. He also told me about the time the cadets stole a piano from the Y.M.C.A. down at Issoudun. It seems that the C.O. (Colonel Kilner) is the proper kind of soldier and backed up the piano theft. The piano was used in a little Christmas Minstrel Show the cadets had. The Y.M.C.A. wouldn't let the cadets use the piano because

the secretary was afraid the performers would get drunk and damage it.

According to Jack's story, the cadets *did* get binged up to the ears and *did* damage the piano (slightly), but a good time was had by all, even to the Red Cross girls and the officers. A person named Miss Given-Wilson (not related to the President) is the boss of the Issoudun Red Cross.

The Germans and the Russians are about to sign a treaty at Brest-Litovsk. Everyone expects hell to split as soon as the weather breaks enough to allow the armies to operate.

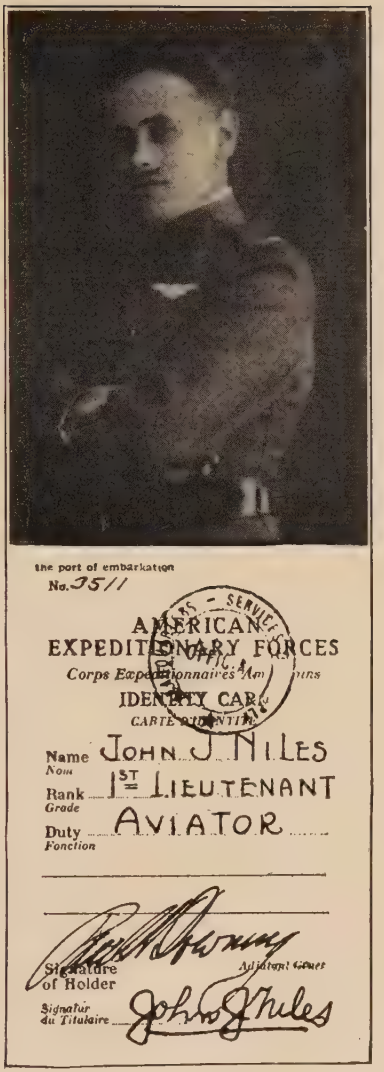
I am still answering questions up at Headquarters.

Diary note, January 26th. Paris

Met Hunky Jack in Henry's Bar by appointment. Jack took me around to the New York *Herald* where we talked with some American newspaper people. One of them is the night editor and a peach of a fine fellow. He gave us the low-down on the news side of the war. I told them about some of my Russian experiences. The night editor said, "Man, that's a book all by itself." I said, "Yes, my lad, you're right, but who the hell would believe it?" Jack and I later had dinner with two hungry ambulancers at the l'Auberge du Clou. The pièce de résistance was a jellied duck and what trimmings! Oh, boy, what trimmings! Honest to God, these French can cook!

Diary note, February 1st

Told Hunky Jack good-bye yesterday. He left with his car attached to a freight train going in the direction of Lyon. The car was full of miscellaneous junk and swarming with lice. What a trip he will have! He expects to put in five days between here and Modaine. His rations consisted of:



THE AUTHORS

LIEUTENANT BERT HALL

He is wearing a black engineer's outfit.

LIEUTENANT JOHN J. NILES

Identification Card carried by Lieutenant Niles during the World War.

1 box of ginger snaps, American issue.
1 can of peaches, American issue.
2 cans monkey meat, French issue.
2 bottles apricot brandy.
2 bottles 3-Star Hennessy.
2 bottles nigger-head rum, large size.
1 5-lb. can of butter, American issue.
1 Camembert cheese, large size.
5 loaves of bread.

At eleven o'clock last night, the sirens started and the *alerte* was blown. Almost at once the bombing raid started and how those Boche did give us hell. It is the first really honest-to-God air raid Paris has ever had. It went on until nearly 2 A.M. At first, some ladies in my hotel invited me down into the *abri* where they served wine and cakes and played uninteresting games of chance, but even though the ladies were fair and negligently dressed, I couldn't resist going out on the street. A gendarme told me to get the hell inside, but I told him I was an aviator and was anxious to study the German technique of night bombing. He retreated under my superior argument.

In the Place de la Concorde, a French Nieuport detailed to the protection of Paris landed with a dead motor. The pilot was killed and the observer was very badly injured. They took the poor devils over to the Crillon and about half an hour later the observer died. The bombs played hell, not so much in a material way, but with the morale of the people.

By God, the Americans better hurry up, because this war has ceased being a hay ride. It's really getting serious. The Boche have given up snow-balling. I leave tomorrow for the front.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Diary note, February 2nd

Amiens ain't what it used to be. The old war has raised particular hell. N-103 is somewhere out in the country near-by; I haven't found it yet. The Britishers are here in great strength and from the activity of the Limies, it would seem that something is about to or is expected to happen.

Last night before I left Paris, I went over to the New York Bar for a last good-bye and ran into a miscellaneous gang of rummies from the American Army. One of them had a very humorous line about his college days. He was from Virginia and was very tight too. He reeled up to me and said:

"Say, Frog, what's your rank?"

"I'm no Frog in the first place," I said, "and in the second place, I'm an officer in the French Army, if that means anything to an American!"

When he heard me speak the English language, the wind fell out of his sails a bit and he went to explaining to me about how unlucky he had been in his youth.

"You see," he said, "you see, Lieutenant, I'm a drunkard and I know it. And a bum and I know that, too. And I'm a soldier and a lot o' things, but I'm a Yale graduate too. Yale made me what I am today and I hope they're satisfied. But whenever I get back to Virginia and sober up, I'm going to hire the best lawyer in Richmond and sue Yale for damages."

About that time another American bozo came up and asked the Yale graduate who the Ninniesniffer was—meaning me, of course. So I said:

"Why, you wall-eyed dragon strangler, I'll swing you a good sock on the jaw and you'll know who I am."

But he decided he'd do the punching and the talking too, so I listened and waited. He said he'd knock me into the middle of the next week. I told him that where I came from, people knocked one another. Then he said he thought he'd stretch me out on the floor and measure me; he wanted to see how long I was, prone. So I told him that if I ever rammed him one, he'd run from the next person who closed his fist. But nothing seemed to get through his head. When the fight actually started, there were only two proper licks. My fist hit his chin and his head hit the floor. He was still talking to himself about an hour later when I left. That's the way with some fellows; the only thing they understand is a sock on the button.

René Fonck is in N-103 and if the rest of these ace pilots aren't careful, René is going to run away with the high score.

Diary note, February 3rd

Went up to Villers-Bretonneux (Supply Base) for some additional gear. Visited the same little bar Lufbery and I used as a hang-out back in 1916. Tremendous activity everywhere. There were a couple of Limey soldiers in the bar talking about the hard times one has getting on during civilian times. One Cockney said that he was a linotyper on Lord Northcliffe's newspaper and if he saved seven shillings a week out of his pay, he was damned lucky, and if he went out with the old 'oman and the little nippers and took 'em for a whirl over a 'oliday, he'd save nothing that week and go without his fags and miss about 'arf 'is ale. The other Limey told him not to worry about savin' seven shillings a week—that before the spring

push was over, he'd be in a place where shillings didn't count for nothing.

The English are a great outfit. Most of 'em, from the Captains down, give their Staff Officers hell. I suppose that if the General Staff was as well informed on the war generally as every British Tommy is on his little section of front line trench, the war would have been over a long while ago. Or, as one Australian said, "If the Staff was as wise as the Tommy is brave, Jerry wouldn't have a chance." At least, it is safe to say that the brass hats don't stack up very well—not with the rank and file of the British Army and they ought to know—something.

British officers and men use the word "show." A battle to them is a "show." And they're constantly talking about the big spring "show." They also talk about "getting on with the war." It would seem that "getting on with the war" is a flexible phrase. One sits in a nice warm little café with a partner and a bottle and "gets on with the war." Or one goes out with a platoon of men, shoots up a piece of German trench, bumps off a dozen or more Boche, brings back a few half-witted prisoners and in that way, "gets on with the war." Is it any wonder the French can't understand the English language! By God, I can't understand it myself, when spoke by some of these bloomin' Limies.

Diary note, February 5, 1918

I will not go back to be permanently attached to N-103 or S-103, as they call it now. They have placed me at the disposal of the Intelligence Section of the French Air Service, and I am to do counter-espionage. I asked one of the Lieutenants at Headquarters if he had any idea how this had come about. I had known him long ago, back in 1915 in the Champagne country. He said, "Yes,

that's easy. Your record as a pilot is very good—excellent, in fact. You did fairly well in Russia, to spy on them for six months and come away with all their decorations—alive in the bargain. You speak several languages and then as a liar you're quite versatile. So, with that equipment, they decided to make you a counter-espion. Voilà!" After that, the Lieutenant and I went and had lunch.

Later in the day they handed me some mail. It had been hanging around for months. The letters were unimportant. One contained a British pound note from a Limey officer friend of mine named Barnes. I loaned it to him in 1916. We were in a bar in the town of Albert. He was flying some kind of a trumped-up Sopwith and now he's dead. He was shot down inside our lines and lived a few days until he finally went out. But he seemed to have had a list of his debts and I was on it. The letter was written in a feminine hand and initialed L. R. Must have been a nurse, I suppose. At any rate, it contained a new one-pound note on his Majesty's bloomin' Bank of England. So, I'm a pound in and they're a damned good man out. That's what they call "getting on with the war."

In the mail was a package—not a very big one—and as I opened it I realized it contained a book. It was a little red book called "Flying for France." There was a badly conceived airplane on the outside cover of the book, but then American artists have never known very much about aviation. At the bottom of the outside cover I saw the author's name—James R. McConnell—Jimmy McConnell's book! We never knew exactly when he wrote the book, but it was rumored in 1916 that he was up to something. I remember he admitted it to me when I visited him in the hospital.

Now Jimmy's dead—buried up near the village of Ham—and here's his little book published by Doubleday, Page in New York City. The book is dedicated to Mrs. Alice Weeks. There's a photograph in the book I had forgotten. It shows the original seven of us with Captain Thénault and Lieutenant de Laage and the mascots. Jimmy McConnell is on the right end of the picture leaning against an automobile and I am wearing my black Engineer's outfit—the one I got from Mimi in Chalons. I sat right down and read Jim's book from "kiver to kiver."

Dud weather. Could not "get on with the war." Drove over to what is left of Perrone with Lieutenant Gastincourt. When the Boche retreated from this country last fall they sure as hell shot it up and busted what wasn't shot. Perrone is about fifteen kilometers from the front, but everything is so quiet that one might as well be back at Villacoubler. Met some English flying officers and they told us their tale of woe. They think their ships are pretty rotten. Christ, these young Limies ought to have been out "getting on with the war" in 1915, when we were flying those two-place Moranes. I told 'em what the war was. When they shoot down a Boche on fire they call it a "flamer."

While we were doing a little barracks' flying, in walked an unshaven lieutenant who was mud up to the eyes. My friend, Lieutenant Bracken, said, addressing the newcomer:

"Why, hello, old Wolf-Tooth. What've you been about?"

"Oh, just cuttin' a few throats in the name o' Democracy, same as you bloody bloomin' aviators should 'a been doin'."

And then the fight began. There were no proper licks,

which I should have enjoyed no end, but there were loads of words and dirty ones too. Old Wolf-Tooth laid 'em asses to the ground. And then I discovered that old Wolf-Tooth was an American from Chicago; had lived in England before the war and had enlisted the very first day back in 1914 and had been in every first-class show the Limies have pulled off since. His name is Carson and we plan to get together soon and spend a leave.

Later, we got onto the subject of the Staff. Carson said (and wisely) that the Staff has always been the Staff and would *always* be the Staff. They would always be opposed to progress and charge up their failures to an "act of God." I didn't say much, but I thought a lot about the Liberties and the DH-4's the Staff back in the States were manufacturing by the hundred thousands. And about those fine young lads from down at Issoudun who will have to fly those old crates. After all, if you want to find dumb folks—men who stand on tradition and do the thing according to the book and make the common people like it, look yourself up a professional soldier; and above all, look up a professional soldier who is a member of the Staff, War College—a General—a Secretary of War—you'll know what dumbness is then. You'll understand why the Russian Revolution happened and why the same kind of thing is going to happen in other places when this man's war is over, unless I miss my guess, or they apply the pruning hook to the dumb ones and the system that invents them.

Won't be enough of us live out this war to do anything much about it though, and I suppose that ten years from now the so-called Military Organization will be as dead on its feet and as rotten to the core and as far behind the times as it was fifty years ago. I remember well how those brass hats, those military higher-ups back at Wash-

ington, yelled about the horrors of the Russian Revolution, and suggested all kinds of cures for the possibility of such a situation. They're the cure themselves and the tragedy of it is that they haven't guts enough to admit it, damn 'em!

Diary note, February 9th

By previous arrangement, I went over to a little hut not far from the village of Lamotte and had dinner tonight with some English aviators. The place is run by a snotty-nosed old woman with a limp and a bleary eye, and a very beautiful young waitress. The waitress is, of course, named Yvonne. She would be named Yvonne. And, she's good lookin'! She's as pretty as the old female is ugly.

I ordered the dinner in French, of course, and while we were waiting, the Limies got to lapping up a little red ink. One of the lads got rather oiled up and called the old girl in to tell her exactly how he wanted his rations. He talked in English, throwin' in a little bad French now and then. Finally the old wench nodded her head and went away. The pilot I know best in the outfit (his name is Binner) said:

"Edgar, all your chaff was lost on the old 'un. She knows as little about the King's English as a sow does about spicin' a puddin'!"

"Is that so!" said a voice from behind us, and there stood the old wench with a handful of knives and forks—dribbly nose and all! "Is that so!" and her English accent was quite upper class. "Well, young man, if your luck is as sharp as your tongue, you might live long enough to find out you're mistaken!" And she went on cooking our dinner.

I discovered later that Yvonne was the old woman's

niece. And all of us discovered that Yvonne speaks English—not awfully well, but well enough. I shall go back to that place. That Yvonne person is a whiz-bang. She has a complexion like an unplucked peach and her teeth are clean too.

The dinner was considered to be a great success.

I don't know whether I like this spy gag or not, but I suppose I'll have to like it—they'll make me like it.

Diary note, February 10th

Today a Frenchman told me the truth about Mata-Hari. Her name was really Marguerite Zell and she was a Hollander. She was tried and convicted as a spy in July, 1917, and executed some time in October or November. She never really expected to be executed; that is, she thought they would use paper bullets, but they apparently didn't. It is rumored that she was so sure of the paper bullet gag that she refused to use the old trick of declaring herself pregnant, which, according to the French law, would have saved her from execution until after the child was born, or until another trial might have been arranged.

I don't think I really ever loved Maggie Zell, nor do I believe she ever loved me, but it makes me feel all creepy when I think of her standing up before the firing squad, particularly, after we had made such violent protestations of affection to one another, and had spent such wonderful times together.

Low ceiling today. Took off in the morning patrol. Front is very quiet.

Diary note, February 11th

Lieutenant Binner, several other Limey pilots, an Aussie flyer named McCormick, and I went over to

Yvonne's place for dinner tonight. Yvonne was more radiant than ever. The other lads are keeping hands off in favor of me. Just why, I don't know, but I suppose they are just giving a *gauche* American a chance to queer himself before they start making their hypnotic passes. This may be unkind, but who could tell. Yvonne's last name is Dacree; she was born in France of a French father and an English mother. Both parents have been bumped off since the beginning of the war. The old bleary-eyed aunt is named Patterson, and she was originally English. They have an estate and rather a fine one up near Cambrai. It's inside the British lines, but the war is a bit too hot for the women folks just now, so the Government sent them back as far as Amiens. On the way, the old girl started up this little restaurant. If the war lasts long enough the Patterson-Dacree family will recoup their losses because the little restaurant is damned successful.

During dinner, this Aussie pilot named McCormick got to layin' the law down about an old bucko named Hargrave from Woolhara, a village somewhere in or near Australia, who invented, or rather discovered, all there was to know about aviation. Lawrence Hargrave is the full name, as I remember it. McCormick declared that Hargrave invented the idea of the Monosaupape engine, that is, the Gnome, as used on all the early French ships and also on the British Camel and the French Nieuport 28. All of us French pilots credit a French engineer named Seguin with the Gnome Monosaupape, but McCormick would not have it that way. I had something to say in favor of the Wright Brothers, but McCormick said that in 1900 the Wright Brothers wanted to purchase Hargrave's box kite idea, but Hargrave said, "Go on and use it if you can." It seems that Hargrave didn't believe in patents.

There is one thing about these Australians—they are strong for their own people. I thought that I wouldn't argue with McCormick, as he was not only sober, but a Captain in the bargain and seemed to know his facts. The dinner was a great success. How old lady Patterson gets the raw materials for the things she puts out is the one unsolved mystery of the war.

I am planning on a trip to Paris to bring back a new Spad. All the squadrons are stocking up on supplies; something is going to happen. The British expect it up at Arras.

Diary note, February the 11th

Dud weather—no ceiling at all—fog right down on the ground. I went over to visit with Binner and together we went to old lady Patterson's for lunch. I told Yvonne that I was going to Paris and asked her what she wanted me to bring back in the way of a little gift. She said she wanted a special kind of comb for her hair and a pair of colored silk stockings. I told her I'd bring her two pairs if she would give me the top of one stocking after she had worn it, so I could wear it under my helmet for luck.

Binner is a smart bastard. All the while this conversation was going on, he appeared not to listen and then afterwards, he said:

"Christ, laddie, how you Americans do clear the hurdles with a woman! You cover the first ninety-nine obstacles in one leap. How do you do it, now really!"

I said, "Oh, that's nothing; it's just what you fellows call 'gettin' on with the jolly old war.' "

He said, "Of course, you mean to do right by the little peach!"

And I said, "Listen, brother, I mean to do quite as much right by the little peach as the little peach means to

do right by me and if you've lived in France any time at all, particularly during the war, you know what I'm getting at."

Binner seemed to know. He simply said, and very English-like, "Oh, yes, yes, old man, of course, of course."

Later I asked Binner why the English hadn't built some concrete trench systems like the old Boche. And he said that the Boche had dug in and built bomb and shell-proof quarters because they expected to remain a long time—ten years perhaps, or until someone invented a method of circumventing the present method of warfare. But the British, believing in more open warfare, had not constructed permanent concrete trench systems because they expected to hop out some time soon perhaps and start an offensive warfare. The British believe in a light, mobile, rapid-moving army corps, while the Boche believe in the steam-roller tactics—slow, clumsy, but sure.

I said, "Suppose the Boche put on an offensive!" He said, "Let 'em try!" In spite of all this assurance, I believe that the Allied High Command expects an offensive operation from the Boche because of the battle tactics we are constantly practicing.

Nevertheless, Yvonne is a darling and I'm going to bring her the silk socks, if I go broke doing it, and the hair ornament too.

Diary note, February 13th. Paris

Big excitement! Bolo Pasha was sentenced today. He will face the firing squad very soon. It seems that he is Paul Bolo by rights and that after he married a lot of money, he moved to Egypt where the Kedive made him a Pasha, so now everyone thinks he's a sure-nuf Pasha, which is really just horse-manure. He was born near Marseilles and has been everything from a barber's

helper to a fish-monger; from a small-sized crook to the most famous international spy and crook known to the world so far.

Bolo Pasha was so damned smart that he even trimmed the Germans for about a million and a half—took it out of that Bernstoff bastard—and that's what I call being smart. The *Bonnet Rouge,* a Paris newspaper, is involved in some way. I don't understand it, but it seems that a few higher-ups are on the way out again. Staff again! Cabinet members!

Diary note, February 14th. Paris and Villacoubler

Saw a French pilot named Prevost testing out an old helicopter. Prevost is a good pilot and I don't understand why they allow him to risk his life on a helicopter when he would be so valuable at the front. He'll just kill himself off in the damned thing. Of course, he might get bounced off at the front too, but then he'd at least have an equal chance—a fighting chance. Prevost has a black moustache.

Saw a New York *Times* today dated February 1st. It told of the January 31st air raid on Paris and stated that the Boche dropped fourteen tons of bombs. It also tells about Secretary Baker's brother having a contract to make $921,000.00 worth of airplane parts on the cost-plus basis. And there will be a Congressional investigation of it. Looks like dirty work at the cross-roads. The *Times* also tells about the American troops being on the front, and refers to a battle which must have been what is called the Bathelemont trench raid. The story in the *Times* is a very dramatic one and in places is a little trumped-up. But the censorship in America is nothing compared to what it is here.

Paris is literally over-run with Americans. No matter

where the Americans are going, they manage to go by way of Paris, and when they get here, they stay. There is a military jail over in the Rue St. Anne. It seems to be full of wandering, lost, strayed and A.W.O.L. Americans all the time.

In the New York Bar last night there was an interesting gang of Yanks, all winning the war by themselves. One particularly loud-mouthed bozo, who heard me speaking the English language, came up to me and said:

"How come you're in a French uniform?"

I said, "Because the French Army usually wears the French uniform; that is, as far as I know."

And then he said, "You're pretty foxy, ain't you! You musta been bit by a fox when you was small."

And I said, "Yes, and I wasn't born on Sunday either."

And he laughed three very nasty laughs and said, "Record those three giggles on your phonograph, will you!"

That ended our friendship. I should have socked him; but then, one just can't be a professional fool killer.

There were quite a few American pilots wandering in from Issoudun and Tours and other places and some of them were wearing bright new Sam Browne belts. They call them Liberty Belts. It seems too bad that the American public is so childish as to fall for all this Liberty gaf. The American pilots talk like crusaders. One of them told me that he had "On to Berlin" painted on his foot-locker. That's almost as dull as the "Nach Paris" used so carelessly by the Germans. I asked the "on-to-Berlin" American if he had ever seen the front. He said no. Poor dumb-bell! I said, "It's out that way," and pointed eastward. He just said yes, as if I had told him that today was the 14th of February.

There was a second louie who was staggerin' all over

the place. A navy man kept tellin' him that he was "shippin' sea water in 'is scuppers." The second louie said, "Some of us'll never come back, boy. Second Lieutenants is the most expendable commodities in the whole damned war." And I said, "Except aviators." At that, all the other pilots let out a yell. "More! More! Atta boy, louder, louder. You tell 'em," etc. One of 'em asked me what kind of planes I flew and I said I flew box cars. They laughed, and I went home and left 'em to their drinkin'.

Diary note, February 15th

Nothing! Just Paris and le Bourget.

Diary note, February 16th. Paris

I'd like to go to a nice American circus and drink lemonade and beer and maybe shoot craps with the ticket-taker. The war is getting to be too much the same, and then all the old faces are gone.

Diary note, February 17th. Paris

Report of a ship named the *Tuscania* having been sunk and a lot of American soldiers lost. Report is unofficial, but seems possibly true. The twenty-eight-meter Nieuport, a staggering affair, both upper and lower wings being of equal size, powered by a Monosaupape (about 160 horse) is the latest French addition to the Allied flying equipment. It's a one-place ship and carries one gun shooting through the propeller. They say it's faster than anything in the air and also a marvel at maneuver. Not thinking much of maneuver myself as an essential part of combat, I am not overly interested in the new Nieuport. I still believe in diving to the attack and pulling away if I'm still alive. Combating by maneuver is too tiresome.

Got the dope on the Lafayette last night from two lads who have just been transferred into the new 103rd Pursuit Squadron. They were Captain Davy Peterson and Captain Phelps Collins, originally of N-103. They tell a wild story about the Lafayette and the United States Air Service. It seems that Doctor Gros and several of his well-informed friends have been trying to convince the United States Air Service that the Lafayette, with its training and equipment, should be taken into the Air Service Branch of the United States Army and looked upon as the nucleus of whatever fighting forces they will ever have.

But American-like, they wanted to make sergeants out of the entire Lafayette. The news came from Washington that many highly trained pilots and endless equipment would soon arrive from the States; therefore, the Lafayette outfit could climb a tree and stay there. Some of the boys won't transfer to the United States Army. Baylies of the Cigognes is one and I don't blame him. Frank is in the best squadron in the world and why should he run the risk of being sent to Issoudun like Lufbery.

Collins tells me that Paul Pavelka was killed in Salonica in November, 1917. Fell off of a horse. Damned if that wasn't hard luck. After he had fought all the Boche in the air, he lived to fall off of a plug horse and die. Just like an aviator getting hit by a Ford ambulance. The 103rd Pursuit Group, which, as I remember it, will be attached to the 13th Combat Group of the 4th French Army, is made up of the remains of the Lafayette Escadrille. Among them are such lads as Soubrain, Bridgeman, Dugan, Biddle, Dolan, Ford, Jones, Collins, Dud Hill, Baer, Ken Marr, Davy Peterson, Bob Rockwell, C. M. Jones, Turnure and Willcox, and some others I

cannot remember. Bill Thaw will be the C.O. and will be a Major.

It was like old times to talk to these lads after listening to the wild-eyed American "Jenny" pilots. Of course, neither Peterson nor Collins remember the early days of Luxeuil-les-Bains nor Bar-le-Duc. Those were the happy days. It is rumored that Lufbery is at the front with an outfit called the 94th. He's either there or on his way. It will be all American.

Back to the front tomorrow in the new Spad. It's a peach! I have the comb and the stockings for little Yvonne.

Diary note, February 18th

Back to the outfit. Had dinner over at Yvonne's. She was radiant about the "coming-back" gift. Ate alone though. Binner is finished off. They got him the afternoon of the 15th. Nobody knows how it happened. All I have found out is that he had done his usual patrol in the A.M. and went out for the afternoon flight. The damn fool should have been satisfied with two sorties, but as soon as they gassed him up, he went back for a third. It was growing dusk and there was a ground mist. It had rained a bit earlier in the day. About ten minutes after he took off, one of the advance positions reported a "flamer," and the next morning it was identified as Binner. I owed him twenty francs which I suppose I'll never pay now.

He fell in the forest between Vermand and Poeuilly on the Amiens-St. Quentin highroad. Both Yvonne and old lady Patterson shed tears as they told me of it.

I finally convinced Yvonne that she must wear one pair of the stockings before she cut off the top as a return souvenir to me. She said:

"Very well, if I must. I shall wear them and wash them all nice and clean and then you can make a stocking cap out of the top."

Of course, she was all wrong. There would be no washing. It was rather a delicate matter to explain. I wanted her to give me something she had worn next to her skin, so that I could wear it next to my skin—and without washing too. When she finally understood, she blushed the most beautiful blush I have ever seen and that was all. She knew and I knew, and that's all that mattered.

As I left, she went to the door with me. At the door, I caught her arm and together we went outside into the darkness. She knew what would happen. And it did! There were only two sentences spoken. She said I must fly carefully and I told her good night. But there was a space of time when nothing was said.

My chances of getting a leave to go with Carson from Chicago are out. Instead of leaves, there will be wars and lots of them. Am planning to go to Paris again for another new ship. We are not going to be caught without equipment.

Diary note, February 20th

I have the top of Yvonne's stocking. The bottom can still be used, she tells me. It seems that I got a very long length. The top was all crumpled up and smelled faintly of some kind of perfume. I asked her why it was crumpled up and she said I was being too naïve. She said how did I suppose a girl kept her stockings from falling down, and then I understood. The top had been wrapped around her garter; she called it "the elastic."

After all, there *is* no fool like an old fool. Here I am a hardened old woman-chaser, eating out of a twenty-year-old girl's hand, and liking it too, and loving it too. If I

could only invent some way of getting Yvonne away from the old gorgon for a little while! Yvonne is more than willing, but the old girl has eyes like two hawks. Tonight, as we were standing outside in the dark, Yvonne said that her lips were curiously hungry for me. It's been a long time since I've listened to talk like that. These school girls are surely alive when it comes to making love. An old man never realizes how antique his technique is until he encounters one of these youngsters.

Diary note, February 22nd

A Limey friend of mine caught me writing in my pocket diary today and he said, "So you're a-keepin' one o' them things, eh? What do you write in it? I've often wished to read some soldier's diary, but I've never had the guts to keep one meself. I'll wager you write a jolly bit of bilge in it—how you won the war all alone and all that rot. I'll wager, eh?"

And I said, "No, not so much bilge as you'd think—some perhaps. Quite a lot about unimportant things." And he said, "Of course, I didn't mean to be awfully personal, old laddie." And then he shared a hell of a good drink of Scotch whiskey with me and we quit friends.

Diary note, February 23rd

First time out in such a long time! Ran into an archy burst and just made a landing field by the skin on my teeth. Was wearing Yvonne's stocking top too. It must have been the stocking off the wrong leg. Plane shot full of holes—will have to have a new one.

Diary note, February 24th

At Headquarters, they tell me I'm not a very good counter-espion, because they say I'm too obvious. I told

'em I didn't ask for the job and that they could climb a tree with the Intelligence Service and stay there with it, but they decided not to go to that much trouble. I'll possibly go back to the trenches.

Diary note, February 25th

At last I have Yvonne into the notion of going to Paris for a brief holiday. She has convinced the old gorgon that it's the thing to do. I, of course, am not in the picture at all. Yvonne has some very near relatives (on her father's side) in Paris and the old gorgon seems to think that Yvonne might visit them to the advantage of all concerned. I see the little dear secretly—at least, I hope it's secretly. One never can tell, with such a sharp-eyed old bird as Madame Patterson snooping around all the time.

I'm supposed to go up to Paris to get a new ship the 27th and if my luck holds out, Yvonne will be on the same train. I am not planning beyond the train. We could stop off at Clermont, but I suppose it's best to let events take care of themselves.

Since my tough luck of the 23rd, I'm not so sold on Yvonne's stocking top. It would appear that I had better luck before I took on that bauble, but then war is not all good luck.

I wish Binner hadn't been bumped off so I could kid him about the love-making ability of the Yank. But poor old Binner is all washed up. "Washed up" is the latest. It is used in place of "washed out."

Diary note, February 26th

Short hop this A.M. and later a visit to Yvonne's place. She thinks it's better for me to come over and eat dinner now and then to keep the old girl from getting suspicious. I don't mind. Tomorrow we take off for Paris. I am

to meet the girl on the train. Somehow, I don't believe it will happen, but tomorrow will tell. Incidentally, I do *not* go to the trenches.

Diary note, February 27th. Enroute to Paris

It happened—with a vengeance! I went up to Amiens early. A short while before train time, Yvonne appeared. She had driven to the station with an old town official. I stayed in the background until she got on the train.

She looked awfully sweet and was wearing one pair of the stockings I brought her. As soon as we moved out of the station, I started looking her up. I had watched where she got on. She was surely glad to see me. We stood in the passageway a moment. The train was loaded to the guards with soldiers going on leave to Paris. She didn't have much to say and I didn't either. She seemed to be waiting for something. Presently, I heard a voice behind us speaking English. She turned around and the next moment she was in the arms of an English Lieutenant. His name was either Rice or Ross or Moss, I don't remember. But she said, "Lieutenant Hall, I want you to meet my fiancé," and the young Limey blushed and went to shaking hands.

The fiancé let the cat out of the bag when he said, "Well, now, I say, this took some planning, didn't it?" I told them good-bye and spent the rest of the trip looking out the window. The idea of that naïve little devil slipping over one like that.

Of course, I had to make the trip anyhow, but then I had more or less planned on a bit of romance, and with Yvonne romance would surely be possible.

Later—at Papa Bouchard's Café—Germaine. Boulevard Clichy

New York Bar was so full of Americans I could hardly get in the front door. About 5.30, in walks Lufbery. He's on his way to a flying field named Villeneuve, where the 94th and the 95th American Pursuit Escadrilles are located. He will be the major in charge of the outfit apparently and doesn't like the idea of it at all. Luf has had a return of the rheumatism and has spent a very miserable winter at Issoudun. Fortunately, he got leave, or rather took it, whenever he wanted.

I told Luf about how little Yvonne two-timed me, and he said, "Well, it serves you right. You had no business trying to ruin a high school girl." I said, "Ruin, hell! What about the Englishman, the fiancé?" "Oh," he said, "they don't count in the life of a young woman; they're so brotherly." But I didn't take any stock in that.

Villeneuve is about thirty-two kilometers from the front according to Lufbery, and about fifteen kilometers from Chalons, so I gave him a note to Mimi, who is undoubtedly still running the restaurant. Mimi will be crazy about Lufbery and Luf will fall heir to a lot of good free meals.

Later in the evening, we came up to Papa Bouchard's. During dinner Luf told me all about Jimmy McConnell. It seems that Mac was flying with a young lad named Genet—"Smiler" Genet, they called him. Well, these two went out on a morning patrol, Monday, the 19th of March, 1917, and no one has seen Mac alive since. Both he and Genet got into a private scrap and Genet got hit lightly. Toward the end of the month when the French pushed the Boche back farther, they discovered the remains of Mac and his ship. The Boche had taken off all

his flying clothes, leather boots, gloves, papers, and everything. What remained of the body was almost nude. So they buried Mac near Ham. The second of April they had a whale of a service for him in the American Church in Paris.

Funny thing, how on the 16th of April, 1917, little Genet fell not 200 meters from the spot where Mac had fallen a month before. Genet was out with Lufbery that time and undoubtedly got hit by a shrapnel burst. So they buried Genet. It snowed like hell during the funeral. Luf seemed to like the Genet boy a great deal. Genet was Lufbery's kind; he had deserted the United States Navy to join the Foreign Legion, and later transferred to the Lafayette.

Luf seems worried. I said, "Old man, you should have a rest!" He said, "Rest, hell. I'm alive, ain't I! There's a war goin' on, ain't there! They killed Marc Poupre, didn't they! Well, no man who's alive in France or America today has a right to rest!" So I gave up the rest idea.

Mlle. Paulette and her partner Imogen cheered both of us up later. Luf said to me during the evening, "Bert, that Paulette girl has the most beautiful chassis I ever saw in my life." And I said, "Follow me around, lad, I know how to pick 'em." And he said, "Yes, you old bastard, like the little school girl up at Amiens," and he made a nasty noise at me through his fist.

I asked Luf if he ever went mushroom hunting, but he said, "Hell, no! That country around Issoudun wouldn't grow a mushroom." He said that the rabbits carry lunch baskets when they pass through on their way from Orleans to the far south. He admitted that there was a little wayside hovel up the road from the main camp where they

served excellent potato "frits" and also damned good honey.

Diary note, next day

This A.M. Luf and I went out to the American Headquarters in the Avenue Montaigne, No. 45. Luf had some things to look after—official duties. It's funny to think of Lufbery being tangled up with official duties. We had lunch in the arcade off the Boulevard des Italiens. I asked Luf what he supposed would happen to us after the war—what would we work at, etc.? He said, "Work at! After the war? Why," he said, "who the hell expects there will ever be any 'after the war' anyhow?" And he kept sayin', "After the war for aviators!" His rheumatism is bothering him today. The city is over-run with Americans, and quite a lot of American females too—in the most terrible long-skirted Red Cross uniforms you ever saw; and the damnedest hats! They look like bunches of Carrie Nations. Lufbery doesn't think they are really Carrie Nations though at heart. He has reason to believe that when they dress up in regular clothes they are quite up and coming. He had a girl among the Red Cross lassies down at Issoudun. She was from St. Louis. Depend on Luf to work up a love affair even in Issoudun.

On the way to the Gare de l'Est, we stopped at the New York Bar once more. It was full of loud-mouthed Americans. They didn't recognize either of us. Luf said, "Bertie, these whipper-snappers will be takin' our places soon. The United States Air Service with all their rules and regulations will find something the matter with me and send me back to help knit sweaters for the boys to wear on the 4th of July. The loud-mouthed Jenny pilots will come in at the end of the thing and parade under the Étoile with the bands all goin' and hell splittin'; that

is, if we really do win." And I suppose Luf's right.

Just outside the station was an old beggar with a little boy. Luf said, "Bert, do you, for Christ's sake, think we'll ever be like that?" and he gave the beggar a handful of centimes for luck. Later, I went out to the field to get my ship. It proved to be a Nieuport-28 with a Gnome motor. Tomorrow I go back to Amiens.

Diary note, March 2nd. Back at the front

Over to Yvonne's to dinner tonight, and she was there —a little sadder but a lot wiser, perhaps. She is scared stiff that I will say something to her aunt that would let the secret out. The old girl does not know anything about the fiancé. Yvonne said she would explain the entire affair some time, but just now she couldn't talk about it. I said, "Same stockings?" She said, "Yes, I saved them while I was away." And to prove it, she pulled up her skirt and showed me the top of the one she had cut off. It had been all sewed over to prevent it from raveling. Lufbery's statement about Mlle. Paulette's beautiful chassis applies to Yvonne too. She's a beautiful baby. I wish she could be interested in one man at a time. I suggested this to the little devil, but she said, "C'est la guerre."

The fiancé's name is Lieutenant Brewster-Price—a double name and he seems to be more than just an ordinary Limehouse cockney. Yvonne says the "Leftenant" means to do right by her and marry her. Lufbery was right about the Englishmen as lovers. The "Leftenant's" family is rich, but he is a machine-gunner. Too bad!

Diary note, March 4th

Have tried out the Nieuport-28 and it's a peach. They say that the construction is weak and that the top wing

fabric will come off unless we are very careful. I haven't dived mine very far, but I have tried it out otherwise. Shot up a bit of trench this A.M. on the way back from the patrol. The Boche are concentrating great reserves. Afternoon patrol very foggy.

A Frenchman told me today that he believed that the Germans could never win because they lacked co-ordination. The politicians and the generals and the home secretaries and the high command never really get together. He said this lack of co-ordination is what brought the Americans into the fracas. He also said that the war being near home, the French population know what the soldiers are suffering, no matter how little the newspapers print; but the German common people never quite know what the war is, and for that reason the German masses will never make the extreme sacrifice. The war to the average German is a legend, but to the French people, it's a stark reality.

The artillery on both sides is more active than it has been for several weeks; perhaps this is what we have been waiting for—artillery in the direction of Lagnicourt and Gouzeaucourt.

Diary note, March 9th

The new German Pfalz single-place chasse ships are damned good. They are as fast as hell and maneuver beautifully. The fact that I am alive and able to write this means that I missed being washed up by one of them this afternoon. And the miss was only by a hair's breadth. My twenty-eight-meter Nieuport is full of holes and I have a lot more respect for the flying ability of the noble Boche. It happened about 4.00 P.M., just over the St. Quentin Canal near Bellenglise. Our formation numbered three and their formation numbered five, but we

had the well-known will to fight. One Boche landed out of control, and one Frenchman from a nearby Escadrille, who joined the fight a few moments after it started, was seen to land under control about half a kilometer from the front lines. His motor was out. I came off with several well-placed patterns of machine gun fire, any one of which might have abbreviated my life, but Yvonne's stocking top did the trick this time. That sweet little devil! I was mistaken about the stocking coming off the wrong leg.

Saw her a little while tonight. She says that she is worried about the Leftenant; that is, Price, the machine-gunner. According to her story, he was going into the lines near Ribecourt. How she found this out, God only knows, and if the Leftenant wrote it to her, I surely have no faith in the British censorship. But anyhow, Ribecourt is in that bulge in the lines just a little this side of Cambrai. I looked it up on the Headquarters' map, and I don't think much of the Leftenant's chances if the Boche start a push, because that bulge will naturally be straightened out and the machine-gunner Leftenant will be straightened out with it. But, oh, hell, I tried to get her to stick to an aviator. She *would* go and get herself mixed up with a really hazardous branch of the service.

Diary note—Later—undated

Been in quarters three days from something I must have eaten. Flew a little bit today, but my hand wasn't very steady. I have a cough that would stop a Pacific type locomotive.

Diary note—Later—undated

To Amiens to the pictures, and had a dull time of it. Charley Chaplin, playing that old Keystone Comedy,

where he is the Crown Prince of Greenland, saved the evening. My cough is worse and when I swallow, I act like a turkey gobbler with the heaves. The doctor says he will have to send me to a rest and recuperation center in the south of France, unless I recover very rapidly. That would be a *mean* thing to do—send a soldier from the mud and crap of Amiens to the Midi or perhaps all the way to Monte Carlo! I'd say that Yvonne's stocking top was a whiz-bang! I'd take Yvonne with me—Lieutenant notwithstanding.

Diary note—Later—undated

Flew a little today, but feel unsteady as hell in the air. I did a short *vrille* and got terribly dizzy. Maybe it's my time to bump off. Found out today that the Russians and the Boche have signed a peace treaty; it is known as the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, and it went into effect the 3rd of March at sundown. That will free all those divisions on the Eastern Front, and now those smart Boche will transport all those free divisions over here to pester us. Saw Yvonne tonight a while. She is worried frightful about her man. I said why not have a man she could depend on, but she said I didn't understand. and then she went into the café crying. It's serious!

Diary note, March 16th

Saw a Limey today who told me that Wolf-Tooth Carson from Chicago has been gassed and is back at Boulogne. My throat is as sore as ever and I have coughed until my sides ache. They want to send me off but somehow I want to stay a little longer. Anyhow, Yvonne is so unhappy; maybe I've got what it takes to cheer her up—if she would only listen to reason.

Later—undated

I believe that my death is fundamentally desired by and absolutely necessary to the happiness of a German aviator in a Pfalz pursuit ship. Today I flew for the first time in quite a few days and a Pfalz nearly did me in. "Did me in" is a new Limey gag. Everything is "did in" when it is finished off. I'm goin' to get me a Pfalz one of these days—get it whole and fly it around just to see how it works. My cough is better, but my throat is the same. I wouldn't mind, only I can't eat, and one gets weak after a while. There's a rumor at Headquarters that an offensive is expected in the Champagne country—or perhaps between here and the Champagne.

Diary note—Later—undated

Had a round with a Limey tonight who thinks I've done Yvonne wrong. Cough better! Throat better! Flying better! Hand more steady! Went on two patrols today. Dud weather—dud as a sonuvabitch.

Diary note, March 20th

Throat worse. Cough worse. Counter-Espionage gives me a pain—too many reports to send in.

Diary note, March 21st

It happened. Up at Headquarters, they told us that the artillery bombardment started at 5.00 A.M. on a front of more than sixty miles. Never was there such a bombardment since Christ was a small boy in pinafores. The concentration is from Arras to La Fere with the principal excitement around St. Quentin. By sundown tonight the Boche had penetrated five miles everywhere, except at La Flesquieres. That's where Yvonne's lover is located, and may the Lord have pity on him! Everybody believes

that the Boche is driving at the connection between the British and the French. The Fifth British Army is taking the punishment.

There was a fog until noon and then flying was hell. The air is alive with German planes. Everybody is worried. But there is some relief in knowing that the long-heralded Boche spring drive is on. The Germans are flying a Triplane Fokker, and it's a superb ship. Squadron 11 is opposite us.

Diary note, March 22nd

What a day! The Germans advanced five or six miles farther. Everything is in confusion. The British are suffering from not having a very good service of supplies, while the Boche are having great luck with theirs. According to the information section at Headquarters, the enemy order of battle shows that the 17th Boche Army is attacking near Arras; the second at Cambrai; the 18th at St. Quentin, and the 7th at La Fere. That makes four army corps of Sturmtruppen attacking us in one place. The line is holding at the ends fairly, but in the middle, God! Being near a Field Headquarters, as I am these days, I hear and know more about what's going on than I ever did before. Somehow, I think it's a mistake.

All the poor French peasants who followed the Boche out last year about this time are fleeing again. What a sight! What a sight!

When I told Yvonne that the place where her lover had been is now in German hands, she screamed and carried on something terrible. The poor little thing is pregnant by him. She said the child should be born in September; that's why she's been ill recently.

My throat is worse and my plane is all shot to hell! Only made one patrol. The casualties in our group are

too awful to recount. The Fokker "Tripes" strip their wings, but otherwise, they are wonderful.

Late tonight I talked with a wounded Australian Captain, who was attached to the Field Headquarters of a machine gun battalion. He said, "Are you a Yank?" and I said, "Yes!" And he said, "Well, Yank, the war is won!" I said, "Who for, the Boche?" He said, "No, for us!" I said, "How do you make that out when the Germans are advancing five to seven and a half miles a day?" "Well," he said, "the war is won, because I have seen the American soldiers fight. Up near the Crozat Canal between Jussy and St. Simon, there was a single detachment of engineers from the American Army, and when I saw them fight I knew the war was won." So I got up and shook hands with him and thanked him and he went on back to the hospital. The Australians are a great gang. I hope this one knows what he's talking about. The roads are choked with every kind of military vehicle.

March 23rd, diary note

It is rumored at Headquarters that the German divisions involved in this offensive are dying off like flies from a new disease called "influenza"; some call it Spanish influenza. It hits people when they're hungry and have no resistance. The surgeon up at Headquarters says that's what I've got. I told him I wasn't hungry, but he said that I had probably been kissing some woman who had the influenza and that was just as bad as being hungry. I don't get it, but I know I'm sick. I kiss Yvonne every chance I get, but she's O.K.

Things are in more of a jumble today than they were yesterday. British are falling back, but the Germans are moving up so fast that they cannot draw up their heavy pieces fast enough. They have a new light trench mortar

that is doing us a lot of harm. It can be mounted on a little gig and pulled along by one man.

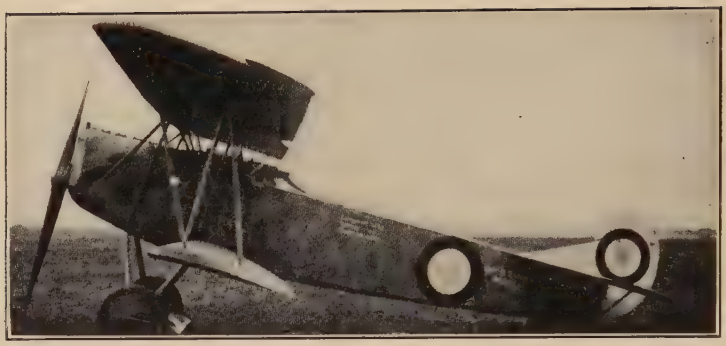
Two patrols today. Pfalz scouts and Triplane Fokkers everywhere. Richtofen's outfit No. 11 is operating against us.

Diary note, March 24th

Everything is shot to hell. According to the map at Headquarters, the lines are now back to Ham, Peronne and Bapaume, and the Fifth British Army is practically out of the war. Twenty-five kilometers lost in three days! And it took months to gain 500 meters in some places. We have moved back. I told Yvonne good-bye and begged her to pack her stuff and come on, but she would not leave the old woman and the old woman believes that the war will never get to her again. So there they are—those two defenseless females—and they won't leave. Of course, in war time, one cannot see the future as easily as in peace time, but it looks as if this offensive might decide things one way or the other. The Germans are throwing in everything they have and the British can't stop 'em now. The First and Third French Army, operating south of la Fere, seems to be doing good work. General Debeny is a damned clever soldier. Saw several detachments of French Cavalry today, so it's war in the open now. From the air I saw some activity around Yvonne's place today; they must still be there.

Diary note, March 25th

We moved back again. The lines fell back farther than ever—almost back to Albert. If something doesn't happen, the British will be rolled back to Abbeville and then the entire English Expeditionary Force will be caught in that pocket. This sounds crazy, but it's not



THE FOKKER D-7. THIS PARTICULAR SHIP WAS CAPTURED INTACT

A STRIP CARTOON DRAWN BY AN UNKNOWN ARTIST IN THE FAMOUS CIGOGNES ESCADRILLE (S-3). EACH FIGURE IS AUTOGRAPHED BY THE PILOT HIMSELF.

Reading from left to right: Commander Brocard, 3 victories; Captain Georges Guynemer, 53 victories; Lieut. René (Père) Dorme, 23 victories; Captain Alfred Herteaux, 21 victories; Lieut. Deullin, 20 victories; Lieut. Mathieu de la Tour, 11 victories.

THIS IS THE PFALZ ONE-PLACE SCOUT. THE GERMANS CALLED IT THE C-1

impossible. A newspaper from Paris tells an insane story about a long-range gun shooting 120 kilometers and hitting Paris. This is almost too much for me to believe; anyhow, we've got the war in our front yard. My throat is still bothering me.

One short unsuccessful patrol and one flight up to the Headquarters at Doullens.

Diary note, Monday, March 26th

Lucky day for me! Yesterday was Palm Sunday in Paris. Imagine those poor bastards, going to church with the long-range gun giving them hell all day. A German dispatch picked up and sent to Headquarters says that seventy-five Allied planes have been accounted for in five days. It looks like the Channel ports for the Boche, unless something happens. The English call it a tactical retreat. Those damned Britishers! They are always so damned calm.

The bombardment is coming closer all the time. Yvonne's place still seems to be going; at least, it is from the air. My throat is better, but I'm getting mighty tired. With the casualties we are having, I don't see how I can expect to last it out.

Four patrols. About 3.15, not far from the village of Gratibus, on the Amiens-Montdidier highroad, I encountered one Pfalz single-place, and I said to myself, "Well, here is where we fight it out! It's either the Pfalz or the Nieuport!" Once I thought the damned fool would crash me in mid-air, but he didn't. When we started shooting, he showed the old signs of nervousness by shooting too soon. I didn't have much ammunition left, so I had to conserve it for the right moment. Finally, my chance came and I let him have it on the back of the neck in three short bursts. I saw at once that he was hit

and I followed him down to make sure of my confirmation. The ground was crowded with all kinds of soldiers but I couldn't tell at first what army they belonged to. Finally, as we got nearer the ground I saw they were English. When the Boche crashed, I landed near by and about five minutes later, got back to see if any of the nice new Pfalz was fit to take back for examination. The Motor Transport people were taking care of the remains of the plane and, strange to say, it wasn't very badly cracked up. The poor Boche devil had landed more or less under control.

They had him sitting on the ground beside the remains of a smashed-up building. I've only seen a few of my victims, and I'm sorry that I saw this one. He had an awful look on his face. It was more like a female animal going through an abortive birth than anything I ever saw in my life. He couldn't talk, but the Intelligence Officers were examining his papers and finding out everything they could. One Cockney soldier who thought I couldn't understand English, said, "Lookit, the flyer man'll be throwin' 'is weight about a bit back at 'is barracks in a little while." But the death look on that Boche's face was enough to take the swank out of me. All the same, I have gotten my Pfalz scout and confirmed too.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Diary note, March 27th, Tuesday. 10.00 P.M.

Rain! Something happened today that will help. A French General named Ferdinand Foch was given complete charge of the Allied Armies. This came to Headquarters about sundown. The big bosses had a meeting at Doullens and apparently decided that there was only one thing to do and that was to have unified control, and Foch was the man. An old French Colonel, who soldiered with Ferdinand Foch back in 1914, told me all about the new Generalissimo. Foch was in Nancy and was sixty-three years old when the war was declared and up to that time, he had never seen a real battle. But the old Colonel said that Foch is the only man since Napoleon who really knows how to fight; that is, who knows what the war is and knows what the conduct of war is. The old Colonel was in General Grosetti's 42nd Division, and that was the outfit that rushed in and cut off the Boche in 1914, down somewhere near Chalons—ran the Boche into the swamps and finished off whole gobs of them.

Foch figured out that maneuver, and it figured the Boche out of the war too; at least, it figured them out of a quick victory, because that started the first battle of the Marne. I remember the date very well—September 6, 1914. I was in the Foreign Legion then and didn't like it at all.

My friend, the old French Colonel, said he was present one day in 1914 when Foch made a little speech to some of the officers of his command. Foch seems to be quite a speech-maker and something of a humorist too. On this

occasion, he said, "My little ones, we can never win this war or any other war unless we learn our lessons the first time, because in warfare there is hardly ever a second chance. And remember that victory lies in attack—not in defense."

Diary note, March 28, 1918. Wednesday midnight

Sick, confined to quarters. Think I've got mumps again. Montdidier has fallen. This morning an anti-aircraft burst caught me and smashed both right end struts and tore a hell of a hole in the top and bottom right wing. I pancaked the old Nieuport down and she turned over and there was nothing left of any value but the motor. I'm a little scratched up and a little shaken up. After this, I fly a Spad, praise God!

Advance still continuing, but slower. N-103 is at le Plessis Belleville.

Diary note, March 29th. Thursday

Today I flew over the spot where Yvonne's place used to be. It was just at sundown. The artillery bombardment has completely obliterated any trace of the cottage where she had her café. And Yvonne! I wonder! Poor little pregnant devil! And the Leftenant—just a month ago now those two were in Paris. Now perhaps they're dead. My mumps are better. The advance is slowing up. The Boche Armies are out of hand. They are too far from their base of supplies. At one place the advance is sixty-seven kilometers. They claim 90,000 prisoners and a thousand pieces of artillery. They call the battle "Die Kaiserschlact." God, I'm weary! I wish it was all over. Somehow, I believe I've had enough.

Diary note, March 30th

If they still want to send me to the hospital I think I'll let 'em do it tomorrow. The offensive is nearly over and Yvonne's gone and I'm ready for a rest.

Diary note, March 31st, April 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th

Hospital O.K., food good, beds soft, girls pretty, cigarettes plentiful, war still going on.

Diary note, April 10th. Paris

I might have gone back to the outfit without stopping in Paris, but I'm developing the old American habit of making the Battle of Paris a very important war. On the train yesterday, I traveled with a Britisher who spoke the most exact King's English of any Limey alive. We swapped yarns about the war and I told him of our binges and song fests. I admitted that we were a ribald outfit, but he seemed to misunderstand. Finally, he said, "Oh, yes, ribald—ribald. You are that! Ribald!" But he pronounced the word "ribald" like Adam's rib. It's always been ryebald to me, and Limey or no Limey, it's always going to be ryebald. So I made up sentences using the word "ryebald" and he kept on saying, "Oh, yes, ribald! Ribald!" We weren't awfully good friends!

What made me sorest of all was when he asked me if there were any Yank troops in France; that is, Yank troops in the real war. We got an evening paper telling about the new German drive at Armentières. It looked unfavorable and the Limey shut up, after that. I could have told him enough stuff to make a big book about the 5th British Army at Peronne, and Ham and Bapaume, but I didn't. He'll know it himself sooner or later.

I suppose the song about Madamoiselle from Armen-

tières won't be so popular in a few days because the Boche are making a fine drive of it.

Later—undated. Diary note

Talked to two young buckos from the 95th Squadron who said they were on their way to Cazeau for a month's gunnery training. They have been at the front since some time early in March, flying from the field at Villeneuve. Same place where Lufbery went. But these poor bastards didn't have enough ships to go around and the ships they had didn't have any guns on 'em. Can you imagine that! The United States Air Service sending the only two squadrons they've got to the front without machine guns! By God, here's the makings of a Congressional Investigation. They said Paul (Phelps) Collins was bounced off March 12th. No one knows just how.

The 95th lost their Captain during March. He was apparently shot down while on a patrol, flying an armed ship belonging to a nearby French outfit. His name was Captain Jimmie Miller. He went out on his last flight with an American Major named Johnson and when the two of 'em got into a brush with a Boche patrol, Major Johnson just left and went home and Captain Miller was shot down. At least, he never came back. The pilots from the 95th are sore as hell at the Major, but what can they do about it!

Norman Hall is in the 94th, and a lad named Douglas Campbell and a racing driver named Rickenbacker—they call him Eddie—and Dave Peterson and Ross Chambers and others. John Huffer is in command of the 94th. He and Hall and Lufbery are all from the Lafayette.

Diary note, April 12th

I am still groggy. Took off a little while today to try my hand. The news from the north is still disquieting. Flew over the place where Yvonne's cottage used to be. The ground is absolutely smooth. I'm going to get one of the men in the adjoining photographic sections to take an aerial picture of the place, so as to be sure I'm not mistaken.

Out at Villecoubler, a Frenchman who was a mechanic in the old MS-38 when I was with that outfit at Chalons, told me that Roland Garros and Antoine Marchal have escaped from Germany. They have been back since the early part of March and the tale of their experiences as P.Gs. would fill a big book. The escape was very thrilling too.

Diary note, April 13th

War in the north still going on. British confident of holding. Tremendous activity in our sector. There are three balloons on the Amiens-Montdidier highroad which we shall try for tomorrow, perhaps.

Diary note. Later—undated

We had all day to get the balloons, and two of them are now finished off and one of our men did not come back and I have a totally wrecked ship and I feel like the influenza all over again. To start with, we planned to attack the first one, just between the highroad and the railroad in that swampy place south of Haricourt. We had been warned of the defense scouts that would be waiting for us on the east side of the roadway in that little flat place.

I was picked to dive and my two comrades, Lieutenant de R. and Sergeant M., were to do the protection—one

from above and one from below. The Boche certainly have their balloons protected these days. Christ, it was a positive hailstorm of steel—and those goddamned pom-poms! Or, as the British call 'em, "flamin' pineapples"! I dived and dived and dived. I'll bet I was going anyhow 150 miles an hour; perhaps more, and it was a good thing I wasn't in an N-28, or there would have been no wings left. Funny how the sights of your gun seem to pounce on the balloon. It looked like an enormous bulgy worm and I couldn't tell exactly when to fire. So I chanced a burst just to see what would happen, but it was too damned far away.

Of course, at 150 miles an hour, too far doesn't mean much. Finally, I let him have it, and then pulled off; gently at first, but even so, it jerked my neck enough to break it off. One Boche had stepped over the side. But one remained and, by God, he was shooting at me with a light machine gun of some kind or other.

This was almost humorous. I'd never encountered anything like it before. In the meanwhile, Sergeant M. who had been in the lower altitudes, swooped up from below and that was the end of the first balloon. I will always remember the odor of those tracers; it's a peculiar chemical odor, something like burning phosphorus. So we marked down "Drachen No. 1, 6.09 A.M.", and in the meanwhile, the other two were hauled in.

There was a ground mist in the late afternoon so we had to go out a little earlier than we otherwise should have. Sergeant M. was picked for the attack and I stayed low, while Lieutenant de R. took the ceiling. I have no clear idea of what happened except that the balloon went up in a long column of lovely flame and Sergeant M. turned over on his side and slipped into the ground not far from la Neuville. One Archie burst came so close to

me that I did a complete barrel, and after that I thought mostly about getting back to the field.

They raked me with everything they had, but it seems that I'm intended to live. I do not believe that the mechanics will try to repair my ship. The motor is still good, but the wooden portions of the wings and fuselage are a total write-off. It's all "washed up," as they say, and I'm washed up with it. Lieutenant de R. got back O.K. He and I had dinner together tonight and we talked of the early days, when he was in the cavalry and I was in the Foreign Legion.

Christ, I hope Sergeant M. isn't finished off—he was a hell of a nice lad. He lived at Limoges and had a wife too.

Diary note. Later—undated. Paris

I suppose they're going to make a ferry pilot out of me. Here I am on the hunt for another ship, but then I'm getting old anyhow, like a tired old war horse, and the influenza hasn't done me a lot of good either. I'm still foggy.

New York Bar full of Americans again. Henry will be rich when it's over. The Americans are the question-askingest people on the face of the earth, and when they're half tight they are sure-fire humorists. Two of their best questions are, "Where do we go from here?" and "When do we eat?"

Tonight a woman friend of mine told me that Bolo Pasha was murdered in the Grand Hotel; that he escaped and was later discovered and before the police could get to him, he was bumped off. Officially, he was supposed to have been executed the day before yesterday at sun-up in the Bois de Vincennes.

Advance in upper lines stopped. Germans have done

a lot of harm though; and the night bombers are giving Paris hell.

Later—undated. Paris

Met Lufbery early in the afternoon. To Elaine's and had a very interesting time; that is, a funny time until some wild-eyed fool from Oklahoma came in with two drunks from Texas. Lufbery and I went out there from dinner. The 94th and, I believe, the 95th, are to be at a field on the Toul-Pont à Mousson highroad, about two kilometers out of Toul to the east. Lufbery seems to like this young Rickenbacker lad. Luf says Eddie will make a fighting pilot. The 94th and the 95th have just moved to Toul from a field at Epais down south of Collombey les Belles.

I told Luf that I thought I had about run my string. He said, no, I was good for many a battle yet. But he did admit that we old-timers are going to be shelved sooner or later in favor of the young blood; that is to say, the younger pilots. The French stick to their "old ones," as they call them, but America has always been a young place—a place where youth is apparently more important than experience.

Another thing, the commanding officers of the American outfits couldn't work with matured pilots under them because the Commanding Officers don't know a goddamned thing about war in the air—or war anywhere else as far as that goes—in a big way.

I told Luf what the Australian said to me when he told me that the war was won—because of the way he had seen the American engineers fight at Ham, and Luf said he believed that the Yank doughboy was the stuff, if properly officered.

Later Lufbery said, "Did you really go to Russia, or was that all hokum?" And I said, "Why, hell, no, I was

there. Honest!" Luf said, "Well, it surely was a good yarn, and I like a good yarn, true or not. Still keeping the old diary, Bert?" I said, "Yes." And he said, "I'll bet that'll be a prime piece of hokum when it's finished." And I said, "Right!"

The Americans from Texas and Oklahoma got noisy as hell and Luf wanted to sock them, but Elaine settled matters by showing the representatives of the Lone Star State the way to the door. They were powerful sore, and said so.

Lufbery said that they had official notification of Captain Jimmie Miller's death—the C.O. of the 95th who went out on a patrol with Major Johnson about a month ago.

The 94th has had two remarkable successes, both at almost exactly the same time. Alan Winslow got one and Douglas Campbell got the other, and both of them fell on the Squadron Field. The remains of the ships have been taken into the city of Toul and placed on exhibition. They won't last long because the souvenir hunters will take them away bit by bit.

Luf is attached to the 94th for the purpose of instruction, but he says that the Americans are too lucky to need instruction. They've got youth, guts, luck, and fair equipment—what more besides experience could anyone wish!

I asked Luf how many confirmations he had and he said, seventeen, he believed. And he was polite enough not to ask me how many I had, because I'm not nearly up to that number. I told Luf about the recent balloon success and he said, "Bert, you always were half cracked about drachens, eh, what?" We were both rather tired and fed up on everything in general. Elaine called us her "old ones"; she said she loved us though.

We are about the only ones left of the original outfit.

My, but we have had some great parties at Elaine's—that's history now, though.

There was an attempt at a bombing raid, but we turned in anyhow. Bombing raids are old stuff to us!

Diary note, April 24th. Amiens

Hell of a scrap at Villers-Bretonneux. Aussies, with support of tanks and planes, gave the old Boche a run for his change. This advance is of no value to the Boche unless he can advance further—it is not a thing they can hold any time at all. My bus is a dud—will have to get a new one.

Diary note, April 25th. Behind Montdidier

The American Armies are in the war. By tomorrow they will have taken over a section of the most active front, about five kilometers of it, I understand at our headquarters. The 16th and the 18th Infantry Regiments of the 1st Division are the first to go in. I had a long talk with a young captain who was surely glad to get the French side of the works from me. He's a liaison officer and naturally I shall come in contact with him very often.

There is practically no front here; just a bunch of so-called fox holes and craters made by the explosion of heavies. We are expecting an offensive on the part of every Allied outfit available. The British are in a hell of a fix just now, but the French and the Yanks are not so bad off, and it is supposed that the High Command will take advantage of the situation before the Germans can re-form and re-equip their Sturmtruppen for another push like the one of March 21st.

Diary note, April 29th. Vicinity of Montdidier

All this country is full of Americans these days. They are holding their section of front with part of the division and keeping the other part back in reserve in case anything unexpected happens. The reserve outfits are going through practice battles until the poor bastards wish they were in the front lines; the outposts even.

Diary note, May 1st

Every day I live, I have less desire to be mourned by my relatives, but the way it looks now that will possibly be my luck. Because, if we have the offensive, it will knock off an even greater number of us than the defensive warfare just past.

Saw a New York newspaper today. A fellow named Muck is in bad with the Government. He seems to be a spy. It would appear that his name is enough to convict him—Muck! One would think he'd have brains enough to change it.

The subject of a Congressional Investigation seemed to be very important. I would say, investigate less and fight more.

Diary note, May 3rd

I fly a little these days, but not regularly. Yesterday, I met a gang of Yanks with the damnedest outfit of equipment I ever saw in this war. They had mounted tanks and machines on trucks, engines and all such. So I asked them nice-like, what they were up to, and they said they were part of a supply train and their job was drinking water and ice. The ice, of course, goes to the kitchens—mostly to the Quartermasters' where perishable food is kept. But the idea of it was surely a shock to me. These damned Americans have the most marvelous equipment

in the war. If they just have good direction from higher up, they will make the Heinies sorry.

Diary note, May 5th

Since May 3rd, we have had the most terrific bombardments I have ever seen. This First Division outfit is drawing us bad luck, and their hospitals are full of wounded all the while. They've got a hospital No. 13 back at Vendeuil-Caply and it's working overtime. The number would be enough for me—13! No, thanks! It's spring and the poppies are everywhere. The Americans pull them and wear them in bunches under their tin hats. They also stuff them in the ends of their 75s. The French think the Americans are children.

Diary note, May 6th

The trouble with a war is that you get bull-ragged so much by higher-ups, and in my case, being able to speak two languages, I get bull-ragged by two kinds of higher-ups, and I must say that I like the American bull-ragging least of all. The French do theirs artistically, but the Yanks just bull-rag and that's all.

Two patrols, mostly protection of photographers. Nothing happened.

Diary note, May 7th

One patrol and a sore throat. The serum they gave me at the hospital last month is giving me trouble. I have spots. My mechanic said I could go into the circus at the end of the war. But I said no, the German circuses in the war will no doubt be enough for me. The Intelligence part of my job is slowly washing itself out, and I'm glad.

We have a rumor of an eleven-cylinder 180 H.P.

Siemens Motor in a very small Junker monoplane. No one has seen it but the rumor is well founded.

Diary note, May 9th

Captain Jim N. Hall fell out of control inside the German lines yesterday or the day before. He was apparently with the 94th or 95th and was shot down while on a patrol not far from Toul. So, another of us goes by the board. He was a great soldier, having done his tour of duty with the Limey army before entering the French Aviation. Now he's finished off. I wonder if some Heinie has written my name on a bullet yet. Hall wrote a damned good book about the war, something about Lord Kitchener's Army. I've never seen it but I've heard tell. Have a return of the sore throat.

Diary note, May 10th

Went over to the hospital to visit a friend of mine who got hit in the mouth with something when he panned a Spad down into an asparagus patch. He looked like a black-faced minstrel. His lips are swollen up about three times as large as they were originally, and his mouth is full of wire. He wrote on a slip of paper that he knows how the front-line trenches must feel, because of the wiring on his teeth. He also has a perpetual smile on his face which the doctors say he will probably always keep.

Diary note, May 12th

Nearly had heart failure today. On the first patrol led by Captain S. we encountered both Biplane and Triplane Fokkers in such numbers as I have never seen before. One of our missions was to protect three of our own observation balloons, but the Captain had delusions of decorations. He hadn't been in the air long enough to dis-

cover that discretion is as much a part of aviation as it is a part of trench warfare. These new Fokker D-7s can dive right along with a Spad, and the little Tripes (Triplanes) can do all the other unnerving stunts. Well, when I saw the Captain dive a formation of five Spads out of the sun onto a whole circus of Fokkers, I said goodbye, Bowling Green, Kentucky. For some reason or other, the scrap really never developed. The Captain panned with a completely washed-out Spad and is in the hospital, and the rest of us got out Christ only knows how. And while this was going on, a balloon went up in flames. I'm damned glad I wasn't leading that patrol.

Diary note, May 15th

Flew up to the English Field at Bertangles on a mission for the C.O. The Germans are firing on the Amiens-Paris Railway all day and all night. Some kind of a change in the American front yesterday and last night. Lots of artillery activity on both sides.

Diary note, May 16th

To Paris on a mission for the C.O. Flew both ways. Landed at le Bourget. Paris is not as confident as it used to be. No one is confident.

Diary note, May 18th

They rang a bell in the barracks today for an *alerte* and I didn't hear it. One of the orderlies said, "Too bad you didn't hear the bell, Lieutenant." And I said, "Yes, isn't it! Because I nearly always hear bells, particularly when people ring them." But he didn't think it was funny at all. These French have a joke system all their own and won't even try to learn a new one.

Diary note, May 20th

Lufbery is finished off! They got him yesterday—in the morning apparently. The news came to Headquarters last night and today I got into communication with le Plessis Belleville. My old side partner Lufbery is gone! A two-place Albatross did it, but some Frenchman got the Albatross later. Our most famous and by far most accomplished pilot is washed up! I believe he has been expecting it a long while, just from the tone of his voice, when he'd talk to you. I wish I had a picture of him.

According to le Plessis Belleville, he fell right in the middle of a little hamlet named Maron. It's in the vicinity of Nancy. His plane went afire after a brush with the two-seater Albatross, and Lufbery jumped. He always had a fear of burning. I remember the very first few successes he had around Verdun in 1916. He shot them all down in flames and then came home and grieved over the horrible death the Boche had suffered.

I talked with him the very first day he came to our field at Bar-le-Duc. He made a crack about my machine having scarlet fever because of the many patches over the machine gun holes. Some of the more refined boys thought Luf was a roughneck, but I couldn't tell because I suppose I'm a roughneck too. Refined men are rather damned poor judges of manhood anyhow.

Lufbery had his own way of getting a two-seater. He used to talk it over with us. He claimed there was a blind spot on both sides of the front gun and that was the first best chance; but if that failed, to pull up underneath in one operation, before the rear gunner could go into action over the sides. Since I got hit in the mouth down at Verdun, I've handled all two-seaters with great care. I don't mind the front gunner, but that rear gunner is ordinarily a mean bastard; he's not to be trusted—and

the sting he can put into those two Spandaus of his will surely make the band play the funeral march!

Of course, they'll have a big funeral for Lufbery, and it's not the thing he wanted at all. Like good old Jim McConnell, he wanted to be planted where he fell and not put anyone to a lot of bother. Lufbery was the last one of the old gang who ever seemed to associate with me. I suppose I'll have to talk to these wild-eyed Americans now.

Diary note, May 21st

I looked up this afternoon and who should come into the barracks but old heart-failure—Captain S. He wants to have me recommended for a decoration for what I did on his dud patrol the other day, but I said, "No, thanks!" I've been decorated by experts and I'm not awfully proud of what I did anyhow. It seems that he is under the impression that I saved his life. I did probably help to save it, but what the hell, Bill, what the hell!

He's low as the bottom of the sea! Headquarters has jumped him with both feet. I tried to cheer him up by singing him the "Worm Song," but I'm a hell of a poor singer.

Oh, the worms crawl in and the worms crawl out,
They do right dress and they turn about.
They bring their friends and their friends' friends too,
And together they nibble the hell out of you.

Some Americans from Issoudun told me that this is what they sing when they bury dead aviation cadets. The tune has something to do with the funeral march or the wedding march or some kind of a march.

Diary note, May 22nd

Jesus, I'm lonesome! And both ears have gone to cracking like hell. It sounds just like the noise of struts breaking. And then I'm doing too much flying at night when I should be sleeping. Now that Lufbery is gone, I wonder if I'll go next.

Over at Paillart, where the Yanks have one of their Field Hospitals—it's No. 3, I believe—there is a little gal who reminds me of Yvonne. When I first saw her the other day I nearly dropped dead, but I was mistaken. Just the same, she made some very soft eyes at me. It isn't worth while working up a friendship with her though, because there are too many American doctors and hospital sergeants around to put up competition. The little peach runs a pastry shop. Her name is Edith and she can't be over nineteen.

Diary note, May 25th

I got a letter today from Captain S's. little daughter. She is ten. She thanked me for saving her father's life and she sent me a picture of some saint or other to carry for protection. I shall send the little kid a return gift. In her letter she said that all the little children in France are praying for General Foch every day, but that she prays for General Foch, for her father, and for me. And then people wonder why we are fighting for France!

I've gone all over this area with the American Liaison Officer and marked all the things the Air Service Headquarters should know. At the village of Bacouel, they have established a field dressing station and, my God, those damned Americans were playing a ball game there between dressings, right under the observation of the Germans. The Yanks are the most irresponsible people on

earth. But it takes just that to win wars, I suppose, because up to date, the other thing hasn't had much luck.

Diary note, May 27th

Captain S. has been missing since yesterday. He shot down a balloon on the 24th and one on the 25th and now he is missing. I have answered his daughter's letter without mentioning her father's fate. At Headquarters, we have news of something happening down in the Chemin des Dames country. The Boche are breaking through.

Diary note, May 28th

Even my old deaf ear-drums could hear what happened this morning. It was some time after midnight when the bombardment began, and the reports we have had today tell of a glorious victory for the Yanks. They have taken Cantigny. We did three patrols today and I was in two of them, so we watched the thing from above. The French Artillery backed up the Yank 75s and the French tanks did great work too. On our first patrol we got a hell of a great big German three-place observation and photographic plane. It went to a young Frenchman who was over the front for the first time. He is only a Corporal and can't be more than twenty.

This afternoon I was up at Divisional Headquarters at le Mesnil St. Firmin for a few minutes and just happened to see some of the Boche prisoners captured by the Yanks. Those Boche were the saddest, dirtiest, dumbest, sourest, stupidest looking geezers I ever saw. They surely are not the troops we encountered in 1914 and 1915, when the German Army was up to strength and not made up of riffraff.

But the Yanks have suffered terrific casualties because of the counter-attacks. Headquarters reports three al-

ready. At the Bacouel dressing station I saw two Yank boys who had been burned with a "flammenwerfer" (flame spreader). Those things shoot a hot burning stuff like tar, and these poor boys were in a terrible condition. One of them was completely insane. He screamed every time anyone made the slightest noise. A doctor told me that neither one of them could possibly live because of the great area of skin affected by the burning. When they took their clothes off, skin, flesh, and all came off in some places. Two mothers in the States will get a flowery note from the War Department saying that God decided to call Willie and Charley home to be with the angels, and the boys will be put away in a grave with a wooden cross on top. Perhaps they might even hang a tin hat on the cross; that is, if they've got hats enough to go around.

Well, when they bump me off they won't even have a tin hat to hang on my cross. I've never owned one of the things.

Diary note. Later—undated

The Americans are holding on and the victory is a most wonderful one. But the promised offensive cannot develop because of the German offensive down in the Chemin des Dames. The Boche are sweeping everything before them, it seems, in a drive at Paris. One would say that the Allied cause is not enjoying the best luck in the world.

Diary note. Later—undated

Captain S. is officially reported down out of control, wounded and captured prisoner by the Boche.

The Americans have repulsed seven counter-attacks. Their casualties have been unbelievable. But the First Division has won its spurs.

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Going to Paris tomorrow. Have orders from Aviation GHQ. Wonder what I've done this time!

The newspapers all over France are boosting the Yanks to the skies. The Battle of Cantigny is not a very important one in a material way, but it has done wonders for the French and British morale. And morale is a part of victory if I know anything about horse flesh.

Diary note. Later—undated. Paris

Paris is a dud. I look everywhere for old faces—nothing happens! Went to the New York Bar. No Lufbery! Only wild-eyed Americans, telling about the Battle of Cantigny—winning the war all over again. Went over to the Boulevard du Capucines and sat down in the very corner where René Philezot and I sat the first day of the war when we planned to join the Legion. But René wasn't there. He's out in a shallow trench in the Champagne country—in a little narrow grave like "Smiler" Genet and Jim McConnell and Victor Chapman and Nimmie Prince and Kiffen Rockwell and Raoul Lufbery and all the rest. And I'm the only one left! No, Bill Thaw is left, too—just the two of us!

The battle in the Chemin des Dames has progressed to a drive on Paris, and now there is a Montdidier-Noyon offensive going on too. Looks like it's all up unless the Yanks have got what it takes.

Out to American Hospital No. 1 a while today. It's full of men from the Cantigny battle. Out to visit Mlle. Elaine tonight; she gave me a picture of Lufbery she cut from a newspaper which he in turn gave her. It's either the *Times* or the New York *Herald*, and it's a whale of a good picture. It shows Luf without the shoulder strap of his Sam Browne belt. It was taken no

doubt before he knew exactly about the American regulations.

At Air Service GHQ today they told me that I was to do a motion picture and take it to America for the purpose of encouraging recruiting in the Air Section. People are leaving Paris as fast as they can pack their bags. People with good ears say they can hear the rumble of the battle. But a little thing like that never bothers me; that's the advantage of not having such excellent ears.

Diary note. Later—undated

In the little bar down the street from the Folies Bergère last night, there was an Englishman who was swinging his weight about a bit. He said to a Yank, "Do you know, after all, what A.E.F. really means?" And the Yank, not expectin' trouble, said, "No, what does it?" And then the Englishman said, "After England Failed, you sonovabitch!" And the Yank socked him so quick I didn't have a chance. When they got the Englishman up on his feet again, some Frenchmen took him away before we killed the damned fool.

War coming closer. Went out to a place called Orly on the south side of Paris where the Yanks have a tremendous field for testing and other purposes. It's a wonder and seems to be big enough to supply all the ships in the world. It's big like American things usually are.

But no one is very happy over the Liberty. It has been tried out and found to be a flivver. They have to make them almost entirely over when they get here. There is a Congressional Investigation going on about the Liberty, or there is about to be one. The pilots at Orly are in favor of it. I flew from Orly up to Chalons and made some shots for the film.

Diary note. Bar-le-Duc. Later—undated

Made some shots around Verdun today. The film ought to be a winner. War going the other way just now. Looks damned bad.

Diary note. Later—undated. Coulommiers and Touquin

Got the full story of Lufbery today. The 94th is at Touquin; also the 95th, the 27th, and the 147th. The story came from Major H., and for that reason, I believe it. An officer named Lieutenant Gude went out about the middle of the morning, May 19, 1918, and unsuccessfully combated a two-place Albatross. Then Lufbery took off (not in his own ship, but a borrowed one) and climbed to the attack. It happened at about 600 meters. Both ships fired several bursts and suddenly Lufbery's ship went afire. He stuck a while and then went over the side. Part of his thumb was shot off by the enemy machine gunning.

He was buried like a general, and, God knows, he deserved it. He had eighteen official victories. There was a little stream of water near where he jumped and they think that he tried to jump into it.

I also discovered that Carter Ovington, who, of course, is from Kentucky, was knocked off May 28th. No details of his death were known. Eddie Rickenbacker is sick in the hospital. Rickenbacker has five victories to date.

Diary note. Later—undated. Paris

Out to the 3rd Red Cross Hospital in the rue Chevreuse. Saw an American newspaper today that says New York was dark because of a submarine raid or something, but that the New Yorkers were cheerful about it. It's just too bad New York had to resort to forced cheerful-

ness because there is a war going on. I'd like to have some of those bright-light buckos over here where the war is. Take 'em out and show 'em the hospital at Auteuil, where the American 5th Hospital is in the race track—let 'em see the rolls of bloody bandages under those hot tents.

My aviation movie and the advisability of it with relation to the United States got me into a conference at 45 Avenue Montaigne this afternoon. There was very little said about movies but an awful lot said about aviators from the United States Army of America wandering around A.W.O.L. in Paris and other cities of pleasure. It would appear that the entire personnel of Orly (Seine) flying field was loose in Paris. There was an M.P. Officer present who surely gave the flyers a black eye.

He said that all they did at Orly was to bum around in Paris and when they did go back to Orly to fly, they had dances and binges instead. A young major who seemed to be the adjutant from Orly was very strong in his attack on the M.P. Officer. I thought there would be licks, but was disappointed. The M.P. could have finished the Major with one punch—maybe two.

The conference got to such a dull point that I was about to ask them when they intended to bring the corpse in. It was almost as cheerful as a wake. The only interesting thing that happened was the little Frog girl stenographer who took the notes of the conference. At least, I suppose that is what she was doing as she was writing like hell all the while. She and I seemed to understand that life was not intended to be all serious, so we made soft eyes at one another and afterwards I found out what her name was. She lives at the Pension Galilée in the rue Galilée and her name is Hélène.

Diary note. Undated

Tried to fix it up with Hélène for the evening, but discovered that she not only has a fiancé, but a mother and a father. Her father is somebody in the Military establishment and Hélène is working not because she needs the money, but because she thinks it the patriotic thing to do. Besides the fiancé, the little devil has a hot beau-lover aviator in the United States Army, who is now down at Issoudun. These *jeunes filles* leave me cold. I'm beginning to understand that I'm a "has been."

Diary note. Later—undated

Papers tell us that Herr Fehrenbach made a speech the other day in the Reichstag and said that the Boche are not afraid of the Americans and that they do not want Belgium. Both of those statements sound like nothing to me.

Diary note. Later—undated

Talked with a blonde kid from Orly tonight. He is on his way from Cazeau to Orly. I said, "What's your name?" And he said, "Call me Frank—that'll do." He's either from Texas or somewhere in the Southwest. He said he had been to Cazeau for gunnery training. He asked me about a million questions. First he said where did I learn gunnery and I said in the trenches. And that started him off. He had been trying to get into the war for ages, and the greatest regret of his life was that he couldn't have been in the Foreign Legion or the Lafayette Escadrille.

He wanted to know all about enemy tactics in the air and enemy airplanes, and when I said that he'd find out this bunk soon enough out there where the war was, he grinned and said, "Yes." He is apparently not a drunk-

ard, but he reminds me of Lufbery when he first came to the Lafayette—all full of get-up and go and hate the Hun and all that!

Frank is not so tickled with being at Orly. He says it's only a ferrying job and not interesting at all. I said, "Well, boy, don't be in a hurry; there'll be lots of war," and from the reports, it seems so.

I miss the maps on the walls at Headquarters. A month ago I would know what was going on and even what the enemy order of battle was. Now I can only read the censored newspapers and guess.

Up at 45 Avenue Montaigne, American Aviation GHQ, and heard that we are having a tough time of it. I wrote down the names of the killed and missing in May. They are: Baer, Potter, Ash, Barneby, Hobbs, Donald Stone, Blodgett, Ernie Giroux, Lieutenant Skeddon, Cy Chamberlin, Fred Casgrain and Tom Ruffan. I'd sure as hell hate to be marked up as missing. I'd much rather go down in flames and have 'em know where I was.

Went out to le Bourget later and took a last hop in my Spad. It's a sweet little ship. I hated to leave it. The mechanics rolled it in the hangar.

Diary note. Later—undated

The Germans are only a few kilometers from Paris now. They have passed Château-Thierry, and last night it started all over again. There was a very new moon, and I could see the flashes of the cannons off to the east. And here I am making a damned old motion picture! I don't get it at all! Paris is almost evacuated as far as civilian population is concerned.

Diary note. Later—undated

Quentin Roosevelt is reported down in flames. I remember how the boys from Issoudun spoke of Roosevelt. They said he was a damned fine officer and looked like ace material in the air. Now he's finished. Many things have happened in the last few months. Many good boys are gone. The war goes the wrong way. The only real friend I had in the war has "gone West"—Lufbery! Yvonne has disappeared. I fly and fight millions of Fokker D-7s all night long, and make a dumb motion picture for propaganda purposes all day. My ears bother me more than ever. Maybe I should have been knocked off a long while ago. Maybe I'm dead and don't know it.

Yesterday I went out in the Passy district and visited with Mother Pivot who used to be the concierge and took care of my apartment. Her son Philip went away with the first mobilization in August, 1914. He was going to the Beaux Arts and studying to be an architect. Mother Pivot was still there, but very bent and very sad. Philip never came back. He was last seen somewhere up near Charleroi. I gave the old girl a present and came away sadder than before.

Diary note. Next day. Paris

Heard today that Frank Baylies is done in. He was with the Cigognes—N-3 originally, and now S-3. It was Guynemer's outfit. Baylies has twelve confirmed victories, and a Jewish lad named Art Bleuthenthal is also finished off. Art was trained by the French. He was a fat fellow, as I remember him, and always in a good humor. He got his June 7th. And Captain McCudden, the famous Limey pilot, with as many as fifty to his credit, has gone West.

I packed the developed shots we have taken for the film today and expect to leave tomorrow for le Havre.

Diary note, later on the "Rochambeau"—enroute to America

It seems to be all over. People salute me and speak very respectfully. They make me feel like somebody, but I'm not here at all. I'm really back there somewhere, in the Champagne, or up in the Chemin des Dames, or beside Jim McConnell in his little grave at Ham, or down at Nancy with the only honest-to-God aviator the Americans have ever produced—Raoul Lufbery! War is a silly business, but there never was a time when the last bit of manhood came out as it came out with our gang at the front. We can't have our cake and eat it too—therefore, the graves and the crosses and the tin hats hanging on the crosses.

I suppose I'll go back now and panhandle Liberty Bonds in fashionable hotels and encourage mothers to let their young sons join the aviation section, but most of all, I am sure they'll treat me kindly like an old man, a little hard of hearing and a lot scarred up, minus some hair, etc. They'll ask me endless questions and all tell me how they have denied themselves sugar and light and gasoline to make it possible for us to carry on—to make the world safe for Democracy and to make it a proper—

(The pen ran out of ink and this is the end of the writing.)

THE END

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